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JEWISH ADDRESSES

JEWISH ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT
THE SERVICES OF THE JEWISH
RELIGIOUS UNION
DURING THE FIRST SESSION

1902-3

1904
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P R E F A C E

THE Sermons or Addresses contained in this volume hardly need a preface. They explain themselves. Nor is it desirable in this place to give a full statement of the reasons which led to the formation of the Jewish Religious Union, or a history of its progress and fortunes in the two years which have elapsed since its birth. Any reader of this book who knows little about the Union, but who wishes to know more, will find a certain amount of information in the Introductory Address, and in a few others of the Sermons themselves. Here it may be sufficient to say that the Union was founded in order to keep within, or bring back to Judaism, some at any rate of the large number of persons (in all classes of society) who are now drifting away from it. A few of these are finding a certain amount of religious satisfaction in other forms of Theistic faith ; the majority seem to be losing their hold upon religion altogether. The causes

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of this drifting away, and the reasons why the existing Jewish religious organisations are apparently inadequate to cope with it, need not here be set forth. The Union has sought to remove some of the causes which appear to make it difficult for the people mentioned above to remain or become conforming and religious Jews. Some will argue that if the aim of the Union is to make religion easier, its very purpose is its condemnation. Yet it may be doubted whether, even if this description of the aim of the Union were accurate, the criticism upon it would be correct. Concessions (if, indeed, this word be rightly chosen) about such externals as the language of prayer, the hour and length of worship, the separation of the sexes and instrumental music, may not be without their effect in removing some of the minor stumbling-blocks, which keep many persons away from all participation in public prayer. It is, however, without question that the reasons of the drifting away go deeper than all these externalities. The Addresses here published will prove that the preachers at the Union services have not been unmindful of these reasons, and that (though

not always from the same point of view) they have endeavoured to meet and combat some at least of the graver difficulties which produce the indifference and the drifting that are so generally deplored. They have striven to show that Judaism still possesses its message of truth, which, even in these latter days of enlightenment and criticism, is either rejected without justification, or neglected with religious loss and moral peril. Thus these Sermons, as well as the Services of the Union, have perhaps been useful to that other class of Jews, who, though convinced of the essential truth of their religion, would gladly have Judaism expounded to them from a more modern point of view.

It may be added that the Sermons are printed just as they were originally delivered. The names of the preachers are given in the Table of Contents, and the date of delivery is indicated at the end of each Sermon. Some of the Sermons allude to passing events in the history of the Union, but it seemed better to leave these references without change or curtailment.

June, 1904.

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JEWISH ADDRESSES

I

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

WE have met here for a solemn and sacred purpose. Whether the religious services, of which the first is being held to-day, will prove, according to the stereotyped phrase, a success, we do not know. How long they may endure, to what they may lead, we cannot tell. Humbly and reverently, at any rate, with simplicity and sincerity, we dedicate them to God. And still do we repeat and believe the ancient message, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." God rules the world and ourselves. It may be consonant with His will that these services should "fail"; it may be consonant with His will that they should "succeed." Or it may be that they may fail as unto men and in an outward sense, but that they may succeed as unto God. He may require the seed which we

are sowing, but the fruit may be other than we can yet discern. The future we leave to God, and while we pray to Him to strengthen us in our work, and to bless it, we are fain to believe that whatever the seeming result may be, God will use all pure and self-less endeavour for the ultimate benefit and triumph of goodness and of truth.

Let me now very simply and briefly say why it is that the responsibility of establishing a new kind of service has been incurred. We have made the attempt because we think that we may give a little help where much help is needed, and that we may do a little good where much good is required. Yet we know that there are those among our brethren who hold that we are going the wrong way to work, and that we are likely to do not good but harm.

We believe that there are many Jews and Jewesses in England who seldom or never attend a place of worship, and more especially a Jewish place of worship. We believe that this is the case in several classes of society, not only in one class. Our present services may not suit (from the point of view of either place or time) some of these classes. If they succeed, other services may be started to suit other classes. A new experiment must begin on a small scale.

This fact, that many Jews and Jewesses seldom or never attend a place of worship, and more especially a Jewish place of worship, we regard as deplorable. I will mention presently why we think it so. But first let me ask, what are its causes? Now the causes are many and various, and some of them are beyond our power to lessen or to remove. But among them we believe one cause to be that many Jews and Jewesses do not like the only kind of service which is open to them to attend. For various reasons the ordinary and regular synagogue services do not appeal to them; these ordinary and regular Jewish services have become distant, unsatisfying, and in the literal sense of the word, unattractive.

Now, this cause is only one cause out of many, and it may well be that the other causes are so strong and effective that, even if this *one* cause were removed, the result would not be different. But we believe that this one cause is not purely isolated. It helps the other causes. Remove it, and the others will also become weaker and fewer. Is that a cryptic utterance? I can easily explain it.

One reason why a given man or woman does not attend a synagogue may be sheer laziness, or, again, it may be a lack of religious sensibility, or it may be an indifference to Judaism. But these various reasons may have been strengthened or

even created by the first cause, namely, that the service was unsatisfying. That made the laziness more pleasing, the insensibility more dense, the indifference more profound. If the service had always been attractive, its appeal might have triumphed over indolence, and changed incipient insensibility to living faith. It is possible that where the forces are still in suspense, and the battle undecided, a new and attractive service may win the day for public worship and for religion. It is just possible that a few may be brought back from neglect to observance.

Now, if my reasoning be sound, and if this one cause be removable, should it not be removed? Should there not be more than one type of service to suit more than one type of mind, to satisfy different needs? It is because we feel the truth of these observations and deductions that the present services have been devised.

It would have been far easier to sit still and do nothing; but as no more authoritative and better organised attempt was in view, we thought it our duty not to let things go, as the saying is, from bad to worse, without making a small attempt, at any rate, to interpose a tiny barrier against the evil stream.

Our feeling that some effort should be made to establish a concurrent or extra kind of service to

satisfy new and growing needs is so strong, and seems to us so rational, that we believe that there are only two valid arguments for inaction. Yet we realise that these two arguments *are* valid, and it is my duty to mention them. If in the first place you believe that it is not right—that it is against a divine law—to have more than one sort of Jewish service, or if in the second place you believe that though it may not be *wrong* to have more than one sort, yet that the establishment of another sort will do no good but only harm, or more harm than good, in either case you are fully justified in a policy of inaction.

Then you can and you must say, “We are very sorry if some Jews or Jewesses do not like to come to our regular synagogue services; we are very sorry if they find Unitarian or Theistic services more suited to their religious aspirations, beliefs, and tastes, but we have no option in the matter. It is right to have one sort of service, and one sort of service only; more than one sort of service will do more harm than good; therefore, while we regret their dissatisfaction, we are wholly unable to diminish it.” That argument is logical and consistent; we fully recognise that these positions are honourably held, and we respect the persons who sincerely and honourably hold them.

But as for us who have organised these services, while our views on religion and Judaism are by no means identical, while some of us belong to what is called the "right," and others to the "centre," and yet others to the "left," we are all agreed on these two points : first, that we do not think it wrong that there should be more than one sort of Jewish service, and, secondly, that we think that the establishment of more than one sort of service is not likely to do more harm than good, but is, on the contrary, calculated to do more good than harm. Perhaps I ought to add one third point of agreement, namely, that we believe that the particular sort of service which we are instituting to-day is a legitimate service and a Jewish service.

In the very simplest words I could find, I have now mentioned the reasons why we thought it right to start these services. I must now retrace my steps, and ask why do we think it deplorable that many Jews and Jewesses seldom or never attend a place of worship, and more especially a Jewish place of worship? Why is it desirable that they should attend such worship? Why is public worship a good thing, or the lack of it a bad thing? And why is one place of worship more desirable for these Jews and Jewesses than another? Why, if they attend Unitarian or

Theistic services, are we not content? Can I in a few minutes give any rational answer to these solemn and far-reaching questions?

The men and women of whom I am speaking are members of a particular religious community. Therefore, in replying to the questions which I have raised it is reasonable to look at the matter first from the *individual* and then from the *communal* point of view.

We must assume that the men and women referred to are average individuals; persons of exceptional character or exceptional spiritual endowment may be left out of the reckoning. Secondly, we will assume that these individuals believe in God. In other words, they believe that human knowledge and human goodness and human love have only, and could only have, come to be because there was and is a Divine knowledge, a Divine goodness, and a Divine love.

I would call the attention of such persons to the immense prevalence and antiquity of public worship or public communion with God in one or other of its many forms. This prevalence and long continuance would seem to show that a certain need is supplied by it. It answers to a want, and it satisfies a want. Let us call to mind the different sorts of people, living in

different ages and countries, members of different creeds and races, who have all found some strength and happiness, some consolation and satisfaction, in one kind or another of public and common worship. Is it likely that we are so other than, and so superior to, all this innumerable host as to be able to dispense with public worship without any loss of character or power? I greatly doubt it.

Even if public worship is a mere reminder or crutch, why should almost every other average person need that crutch while we do not require it? Shall others find it hard to live in the realised presence of God without the help and stimulus of public worship, and shall we find it easy? And yet so to live is for all believers in God the ideal life.

For everything, says the Preacher, there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven. To have definite hours and seasons for doing different things is part of man's distinction, as it is also part of his limitation. That which has not its own hour has often no hour at all. That which we can do at any time is (if I may say so) often done at no time. Too much opportunity is as bad as too little opportunity. Prayer, communion with God, and religion need their special times and seasons.

That is the almost universal experience of mankind. I do not think that you or I are likely to be above it.

But, you may say, "From the merely individual point of view—and after all a community is only composed of individuals—why must we go to synagogue in order to commune with God? Can we not pray to Him wherever we are? Is not private worship as good as public worship? Can we not make a temple of our own homes?" But the answer is that the two forms of worship go together; each helps the other, and each has an excellence of its own. Prayer and worship need time, though it may be true that the concentrated devotion of a moment is better than the listless inattention of an hour. Yet as a general rule they need time; they need repose. It is this repose which public worship can give to us. "Here," as the late Master of Balliol so exquisitely said, "we may pause for a moment in our journey that we may proceed refreshed. Here we are raised above the mean thoughts of mankind; we hear words of the saints and prophets of old; we live for a short time in the nearer companionship of God and of another world; we pass in review the last few days, and ask ourselves whether we are doing enough for others; we

seek to realise in our minds a higher standard of duty and character. Here are revived in us those aspirations after another and better state of being, which in good men are always returning, and are never completely satisfied, but which, like wings, bear us up on the sea of life, and prevent our sinking into the routine of custom which prevails in the world around us. Here we resign ourselves to the pure thought, to the pure will, to the pure mind, which is the truer part of our own souls, and in which and through which we see God. It would be foolish to maintain that we should be always attending to the words of the service, or that our thoughts may not wander to our own individual circumstances. One advantage of public worship is that it is also private ; any reasonable act of devotion may form part of it ; we may offer up to God our studies, entreating Him to give us the power so to use our natural talents that they may be the instruments of His service. We may consecrate to Him our business, praying that the gains we make may be employed in His service, and sometimes devising plans of charity and philanthropy. We may review our thoughts, begging Him to take from us all vanity, levity, sensuality, and to infuse into us a new mind and character. As in a family our

parents are our best confidants, so God is our father and confidant, in whom we trust, telling Him of our weaknesses, and receiving strength from Him."

For all these thoughts and prayers public worship provides us the opportunity which many of us never dream of giving to ourselves in our own homes. For in the ordinary day every hour is taken up with quite other matters than these, and even our leisure few of us are likely to dedicate to holy thoughts and religious aspirations. Let us be honest. Who pray more regularly at home, who think of their lives in relation to God and duty more frequently and earnestly—those who attend public worship, or those who are never seen within the walls of a synagogue? If I am speaking to some persons who very rarely attend a place of worship, I would venture to ask them whether, in their case, the lack of public prayer is made up by the frequency and fervency of private prayer. The truth is that he who prays in synagogue will also pray at home; he who never enters the synagogue will not often open his lips in prayer outside it. He who does not know how to pray (not merely to read prayers) in private will not know how to pray in public; he who never prays in public is likely to forget his

prayers and his God within his own home. If the public sanctuary becomes estranged to us, it is likely that the private sanctuary will disappear as well.

Moreover, though it be true that one advantage of public worship is that it is also private, that is not its only advantage. Praying in private is not quite the same thing as praying in public. In public worship "we receive a kind of support and strength from one another." The spectacle of a crowded congregation of earnest worshippers, the common or congregational singing of a simple hymn, have a peculiar effect upon us. They do not leave us wholly cold. We are drawn out of ourselves and feel one with our fellows. We join with them in the adoration of the Supreme. We gain something of their fervour, and we add to it ourselves. We realise the communal spirit and the communal responsibility, and in forming a conscious part of a larger whole, we more fully realise ourselves. Thus, even as mere individuals, the loss of public worship is a loss to our own souls.

But we are not mere individuals. We are members of a particular religious community, and the community has need of us all. We have no right to withdraw from it, or to seek to

gain our religious nurture from other religious organisations, while we still feel that the title Jew or Jewess is a correct appellation for our own religious belief. And, furthermore, while we still feel that, no other service can do us so much religious good as a service which claims to be a Jewish service. Every other service will leave some part of our religious endowment or faith unsatisfied, because, if Jews we are, it is only by Judaism that our religious hunger can rightly and fully be fed and stilled. We feel our kinship with all mankind ; but we also require a definite and beloved country of our own. We may feel sympathy with other creeds, or with religion as an abstraction and as a whole ; but we also require a definite and beloved religion of our own. What is best for the community will in the last resort be best for ourselves.

A religion lives in and by the persons who profess it. They can make it better ; they can make it worse. It is, then, for us to make Judaism better ; to help it and to purify it both by the fervour of our adherence and by the value of our lives. You know the meaning of the old phrase, "the Sanctification of the Name" ? You know the meaning of its opposite, "the Profanation of the Name" ? Well, is it not

a "Profanation of the Name" when men say of us, who should be the witnesses of God, that we are materialists, lacking in saintliness and religious ardour? Or rather is not the real profanation that, to our sin and shame be it said, there are so many of us of whom the charge is true?

Let us remember that one of the essential doctrines of the Jewish religion is the hallowing of common things, of ordinary life. Judaism is a religion of joy. But it bids us make of our joy, as of our sorrow, an offering to God. It does not discern the highest life in asceticism, but in a life dedicated to the common good. It does not ask us to maim or cut off any of our energies or capacities, but it asks us to sanctify them in the service of God.

While no religious doctrine or ideal is better than this, it has also its peculiar danger. Relax the religion, weaken the spiritualising fervour, and there remains only the mere raw material. There remain the energies and activities and enjoyments, unsanctified, unhallowed, shameless and unrestrained. Perhaps that is why it is that no materialist is coarser and more selfish than a Jewish materialist, that no one can neglect religion with greater danger to himself and to society than the Jew. *Corruptio*

optimi pessima corruptio. But if that be so, we can also turn the proverb round ; the worst corruption makes us look for and remember that best of which it is the opposite. Increase the number of religious Jews, religious in the best and fullest and only real sense of the word, and the world, as well as our community, will profit and be the better.

It is with thoughts such as these in our minds that some of us have set about the fashioning of the new services we inaugurate to-day. May they help a few, at any rate, to draw nearer unto God, to live more as unto Him, and in His sight, and in better accordance with His holy will. Amen !

October 18, 1902.

II

PERSONAL RELIGION

“ I am the Lord thy God.”

THE movement inaugurated on Sabbath last has, as might have been anticipated, attracted a certain amount of attention in our community. Whatever criticism it may evoke, one consolation is ours—we have set out with no selfish object in view. It is the highest of all our common interests that is at stake. We are helping to perfect one another's lives through the medium of the faith of Israel. It is all a question of methods. Methods other than those which the Jewish Religious Union has after due deliberation adopted, happily succeed elsewhere and with others. To be associated with the older methods is to many of us, and to myself especially, a privilege and a joy. If there had been any likelihood of their proving serviceable to those for whom the Union has been formed, how gladly, how eagerly they would have been embraced !

But it seemed right that some effort should be made to win and keep for Judaism those brothers and sisters of ours who were drifting from it, and to do this by means, legitimate in themselves, by which they would be likely to be attracted and secured. If you want to do any good to people—to people of mature age and judgment—you must do it in the way they are prepared to accept it. One almost owes an apology for solemnly enunciating so elementary a truth. Alas! it is always the elementary truth that is most persistently ignored. Certainly, also, it is time that the policy of ignoring the religious needs of a large and increasing class of the community, the policy of indifference to the indifferent, were abandoned. Such a policy may at times amount to spiritual fratricide. You may kill what religion there is left in your brother with the weapon of your self-righteousness. You may stifle the breath of faith in him by a sneer. Such things have been known to be.

This is not the place nor are these meetings the occasions to carry on a controversial war. If any should come to these services with that expectation, they will be egregiously disappointed. To all who take a different view from ourselves

and express it, whether temperately or intemperately, our answer is, We are making a serious effort to remedy a serious defect among us, a defect which has so far not been dealt with, though the need for dealing with it is daily becoming more crying. We are full of hope in the ultimate success of our undertaking. If we can point to fifty, to ten, to a single one of our brethren whom we have kept and strengthened in the faith and hope of Israel, we shall have justified our existence. "He who saves a single soul in Israel is as though he had saved a whole world," says the Talmud, for in that soul a whole spiritual world is potentially contained. And if we fail, we shall have the consciousness of having failed in a noble cause. Others will follow, will learn from our errors, and will succeed. In God's name may they do so. We only know, "It is time to work for the Lord." And so putting aside all Jewish polemics, let us turn to Judaism. That is the subject that in one form or another will constitute the main topic of the discourses to be delivered at these services.

In pursuance of this purpose let us turn our attention to some fundamental teachings of Judaism, as expressed in the opening words of the Decalogue, "I am the Lord thy God."

There is a legend that the food upon which

the Israelites were nourished during their wanderings in the wilderness was wondrously adapted to the needs and tastes of each age and person. The young, the middle-aged, the old, each found in it the special nutriment they needed. But, say the Rabbis, not in God's material gifts alone was this consideration for the diverse capacities of men manifested. It was evidenced at the most momentous epoch in the history of religion. When God proclaimed His law on Sinai each child of Israel heard himself addressed in the words, "I am the Lord *thy* God." "The voice of the Lord was with power," that meant, we are told, not with *His* power, for no mortal could have borne the strain, but with the power of each man to receive it; with the special faculty of each individual to grasp the conception of Deity.

The naïveté of this presentation of a great truth is very striking. Human minds—so speaks the common sense of our fathers out of the poetry in which they clothed their ideas—human minds are not all cast in the same mould, nor are they all endowed with the same spiritual capacity. Very diverse must have been the receptive power for things religious among the members of that vast audience of humanity. Yet in his degree every one possessed the religious faculty; and to every soul there waiting and watching God

appealed individually, personally: "I am the Lord thy God."

Two solemn truths seem to be conveyed in these, the opening words of the Decalogue: First, the doctrine of a *personal God*, and next, the doctrine of a *personal Religion*. A personal God—by which I would be understood to mean the belief that God Himself takes note of me myself, and is therefore *my* God. If there is a God, and He is not conscious of me, does not watch over me, cares not for me, has no love for me, then He is not *my* God, and to all intents and purposes there is no God for me. It is the opposite of all this that it was the first aim of Judaism to teach. "I am the Lord thy God"—that is, not merely a God immanent in, and diffused through all nature; not the transcendent God, who, having finished the work of creation, withdraws from the world He has made, and concerns Himself no longer with its fate or with that of the beings who live therein; not merely a "stream of tendency that makes for righteousness," but a God to whom thy heart and all its needs, its errors, sorrows, failures, struggles, aspirations are known and by whom they are marked, who loveth thee because thou art His child. Where shall you meet with a more inspiring and ennobling doctrine?

True, not all men grasp this idea in its fulness. True also that in the measure in which they do so, in that measure they approach Him. Not to every man is it given to see God face to face. Such as we are we must be content to see Him at an angle, as it were ; to catch a glimpse, a ray of His glory. In contemplating a Being of aspects infinite, it is not to be wondered at that not all men behold of Him precisely the same aspect, and that to this man one, to that another of the divine attributes is most clearly revealed. The message of supreme comfort which Judaism gives us is that, however limited and imperfect our conception of Deity, God's knowledge of us is perfect, His love for us infinite. "I am the Lord thy God." His relations to us are personal.

But "I am the Lord thy God" means more. It means that man must stand in personal relation to Him. If there is a God, and I shut Him out of my mind ; if I do not seek to know His will ; if I do not allow the thought of Him to be a living influence in my life, then He is not "my God," and once again there is to all intents and purposes no God for me. Something is required of me. At least I must desire Him. If my intellect finds it difficult to realise Him, and fails to "prove" Him, at least let my heart desire Him.

And marvellous is the effect of such desire. There is a reflection of Kepler, which Goethe quotes and supplies with a noteworthy comment. "It is my highest wish," said the great astronomer, "that in the same measure in which I find God everywhere in the world outside me I may recognise Him in my heart of hearts." Whereon the poet remarks, "The noble fellow was unaware that at that very moment the divine element within him was in closest union with the divine element pervading the universe." To seek God is to find Him. At the instant when we are yearning for some manifestation of Him, He is already revealing Himself to us—in our desire to find Him. That very desire testifies concerning Him.

"I am the Lord thy God" implies in the next place a personal Religion ; by which I mean the direct personal responsibility of each individual soul to the God who created it. He who duly realises the force of that appeal will never give over his religion or his conscience into another's keeping, be he who or what he may. Of all charges put upon man in this world religion is the most intensely personal. He cannot transfer the responsibility to another. He may well allow a legitimate influence to learning and to character, and that influence may be invoked to

help him in coming to a decision in matters of faith and doctrine. But the actual decision, which can only be arrived at after thought and prayer, and perhaps, after much inner conflict, rests with him, and for that decision he will be held responsible.

Jews are sometimes accused of an excessive independence of all human religious authority. I fear there are some grounds for the charge, and it is a serious enough matter when that independence leads to a casting off of all religious ties. But the other extreme is fraught with danger no less grave. To imagine that you can save yourself the trouble of thinking for yourself about the most sacred questions touching the human soul; to cry out for a comfortable religion in which the minister or the rabbi will settle every difficulty for you, so that you can be free to pursue your business or your pleasure, unburdened by thoughts about things which you complacently persuade yourself do not concern you; to ask that men or systems shall come between you and your God, and stand in the place of God—this is to evade your most sacred duty, it is to abrogate your highest privilege, it is to forget that to each of you individually, without distinction, were addressed all those commandments at the head of which stands the

divine proclamation, "I am the Lord thy God." It was one of England's master minds, a man saturated with the Hebraic spirit, who more than two and a half centuries ago wrote these manly words in the *Areopagitica*, "A man may be a heretic in the truth ; and if he believes things only because his pastor says so or the Assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy. There is not any burden that some would gladlier pass on to another than the charge and care of their religion."

And as with religious belief so with religious practice. There is a growing tendency among us, an un-Jewish tendency, in which we have followed our neighbours with a too facile imitativeness, to divide the community into two classes, almost as if they were two distinct castes—the laity and the clergy. You may have heard it said, perhaps you have said it yourself, "Every man to his trade or profession. I don't profess to be religious—that is not my business." My friend, it *is* your business, your inalienable, your most vital business. By no device can you rid yourself of it. No proxy can represent you in what concerns you to the uttermost. Least of all is this possible in

Judaism, least of all among those who are called to be a kingdom of priests, whom God has destined for something better than to eat and drink to-day and to-morrow to die ; whom once He summoned into His presence, and whom He will one day call into judgment with "I am the Lord thy God." Those words, it is of vital consequence for us all to remember, are the true sanction and superscription of the whole scheme of Jewish duty. They err greatly who imagine that all that is required to constitute a Jew is to give an intellectual assent to some abstract proposition, such as the existence or the unity of God. Judaism is more than a creed ; it is a discipline. Frankly, my friends, it is useless to expect that Judaism can ever become an easy religion. Let no one who joins this Union be under any misapprehension on that point. You may to a certain extent modify the outward form and ritual of your faith ; you may correct your historical perspective by a deeper study of the past ; you may plead for a due adjustment of the relations between morals and ceremonial—you can never reduce Judaism to a religion of mere convenience, offering a maximum of reward for a minimum of obligation and effort.

For what is it to be a Jew ? To be a Jew is to be a faithful and fearless witness for God.

To be a Jew is to feel oneself a member of a great brotherhood in which the safety, the welfare, and the honour of all is in the keeping of each. It is to stand firm against temptation and corrupt example from far and near. It is to make sacrifices of time, toil, treasure, comfort, for your faith. It is to answer all detractors by a blameless life. It is to be in sympathy with, and, as far as may be, to bear a part in all endeavours for the betterment of the world. It is to glory in your heaven-directed history, and to bear in mind that he who cares not for Israel's past is not likely to do much that will be worth remembering in Israel's future. It is to cherish your inheritance in the word of God, and diligently and lovingly to study it. It is to unite with all who are willing to help, according to their opportunities, to roll away the reproach of religious apathy from a people in whom of all peoples such a reproach is least pardonable. To realise these holy truths, and to translate them into life and action, may the aid be granted us of Him who said, "I am the Lord thy God." Amen.

October 25, 1902.

III

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

“Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall return ; renew our days as of old.”—LAM. v. 21.

THESE words were spoken when there seemed little hope for Israel. Their country was in the hands of the despoiler ; their national existence seemed at an end. They might well say, “Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost ; we are quite cut off.” But the best men amongst them felt that hope was not lost. Let but God help them to return to Him and all might yet be well. On the very day, says the tradition, when the temple was destroyed, the Messiah was born. Calamity rightly used might lead to national regeneration.

Some 2500 years have passed. We Jews now belong to the modern world. Old methods of thought are undergoing rapid change, and this is as true in the sphere of religion as elsewhere. Biblical criticism has disintegrated many of our old conceptions ; its tendency

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hitherto has been to destroy rather than to build up. Even those who reflect little on theological subjects have been unconsciously influenced by the new ideas which have come to birth. Besides, the greater freedom of modern life, and increased opportunities of intercourse between Jew and Gentile, in the school, the office, and the home, have tended to weaken the bond that united us to each other and to the synagogue. There is a certain inertness in human nature which, at all times, resists the operation of spiritual forces, and the old impetus which once shamed us from our indifference seems to have exhausted itself.

Shall we rashly conclude that the lamp of faith is quenched? Are all the inarticulate thousands of our race around us devoid of religion? Surely not. God reveals Himself, as of old, to the souls of men. The voice of conscience, the promptings of duty are still strong to save. True that our age has its own peculiar temptations, that there is a darker side to modern industrial development. Greed and selfishness, dishonesty and cruelty, dress themselves up according to the latest fashion, but they have always done so since the dawn of history. Mankind has ever struggled upwards towards the light, and signs of moral

growth are apparent, now as ever. It is in action that religion bears fruit, and by this test we may convince ourselves that it retains vital force.

At the same time, the present condition of Judaism in England may well cause anxiety. There are some whose needs are satisfied by the law and the traditions. That is a position intelligible and worthy of all respect; but, for good or evil, many of us have ceased to hold it. On the other hand, there is an ever-increasing number of Jews, not devoid of religion, but in whom religion has become latent, and no longer knows itself. The outward signs which symbolise the link between man and God are neglected. Religious observance has become slack; attendance at public worship has greatly diminished. It may be admitted that the service of the synagogue and the maintenance of ceremonial law are only means to an end, but they cannot be neglected with impunity. Jewish character has derived many of its noblest elements from the observances of Judaism, which teach with such touching eloquence that all the powers and faculties of man are to be devoted to the service of the Supreme. The mediæval Jew, unlike his Christian neighbour, was not encouraged to confound piety with asceticism, but

he was taught to sanctify his joy, and to regard as the highest form of happiness the שמחה של מצוה—the gladness of spirit derived from carrying out God's commands. Although the observance of outward forms only constitutes a prop to religious feeling, which may exist independently of such support, it is dangerous to withdraw it. Probably most of us are aware of this danger from our own individual experience ; "every one knoweth the plague of his own heart." Speaking generally, as is more fitting, Jewish society, in East and West London alike, shows growing signs of materialism, which advances hand in hand with indifference to religious observance. Many persons, it is true, have discarded ceremonial forms, and yet continue to pursue high ideals ; but are they not, perhaps, guided unconsciously by the habits of thought in which they were reared, or by the national characteristics which their race has acquired by the persistent spiritual effort of many generations ? Is there no danger that these faculties may gradually become atrophied, through disuse of the methods by which they were exercised ? The soul which ceases to enjoy the consolations of religion, is like a prisoner condemned to perpetual darkness.

But we have not yet grappled with the real difficulties of the question. Nearly every one will admit that the need for religion is a permanent one, and that religion must be wedded to some forms of observance, more or less definite. It may be asked, however, whether we are still justified in calling ourselves Jews. Some may deny that much of the old faith has survived the ravages of modern thought, and may urge us to unite in worship with those of our fellow-countrymen who share our own belief in the Unity of God. Let us not conceal from ourselves that this is a course which commends itself to some generous minds, and that many others are drifting unwittingly in the same direction. Assuredly we have arrived at what the prophets would have called a "day of the Lord"—a crisis in the history of Judaism, when a policy of mere drift has become impossible, and when it has become incumbent on us to test the foundations of our belief. This is a task which every one must do for himself. The words of others may help us, but we cannot afford to accept our convictions at second hand. "None of them can by any means redeem his brother," says the Psalmist; the faith which saves must be born in the heart itself. Even if time permitted, I should therefore refrain

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from argument on these high matters; before the tribunal of the conscience no stranger can be permitted to plead. I may, however, be permitted to set before you a few general considerations.

Every religious movement may be regarded in two lights. On the one hand, it is a step forward. Every age has its new needs, its new methods of expression. The ways of God become better known as mankind grows older: "through the ages an increasing purpose runs." The promised land lies before us, God's Kingdom is yet to come :

"Eden with its angels bold,
Love and flowers and coolest sea,
Is less an ancient story told,
Than a glowing prophecy."

At the same time, it is no paradox to say that a worthy religious movement must be, in part, a return to an older state of things. Every religion commences as a vital principle, that transfigures life. Without renewed enthusiasm it would gradually wither and die. A revival of religious feeling is not brought about by breaking with the past, but rather by awakening memories, half forgotten, and by stimulating our flagging spirit, through the example of those that went before

us. The old formularies, the old observances seem to derive a new meaning ; the present joins hands with the past ; God's spirit is breathed upon the dry bones, so that they live once more.

"Cause us to return to thee, O Lord," we have read in our text. The Hebrew prophets all taught that their people must step back from sin, in order to regain the spiritual inheritance which they had once enjoyed. The prophets had no respect for religious conventions ; they had a noble scorn for those whose fear of God is as a commandment of men, which has been learned by rote. None the less did they value the traditions of their race, so that the Bible has a wonderful continuity of teaching and unity in essentials, although it is a national library of religion, written by men divided from each other by wide spaces of time and by very different conditions of life. One can often trace a development of doctrine in the Bible, but there never seems to be any real break in continuity. The new is connected with the old by an organic process of growth. That which has become imperfect is restored rather than replaced. The "instruction of the Lord," mainly as received from past ages, is considered throughout the Scriptures as the rule by which life is to be

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regulated. May we not also follow the footsteps of the prophets, these pioneers of religious reform, and endeavour to adopt their methods?

It is better to build on the old foundations. The principles of Judaism are essentially those of universal religion. The world has learned from the Jew that there is one God, who delights in righteousness. Whilst the religions of Greece and Rome deified beauty and strength, the influence of Judaism has set before the world an ideal of mercy and goodness. The actual provisions of the civil law, as formulated in the Pentateuch, may have become obsolete, but the world will never outlive the principles on which these provisions are based. Love thy neighbour as thyself; take not vengeance; put not a stumbling-block before the blind; uphold thy brother, if he be waxen poor;—these and many other injunctions are a priceless gift, to be given through us to the world. The language of these precepts sounds so familiar to us that we are tempted to consider them as commonplace. If we compare them, however, with the actual practice of humanity, we can see how great a difference there is between the world as it is and the world as it might be. When mankind has absorbed these lessons of justice and

humanity, the kingdom of God upon earth will indeed be established.

Judaism is therefore primarily an embodiment of the moral law. The life of the Jew is to bear witness to the power of goodness and the love of God. Our ceremonial observances aim at achieving the same end. Consider the three great festivals. Passover is the feast of freedom ; Pentecost is the feast of revelation ; Tabernacles is the feast of gratitude for the divine gifts vouchsafed us. The lessons taught by these festivals are primarily exemplified by the facts of Jewish history, but they are capable of a far wider application. The Exodus from Egypt has inspired many another struggle for liberty ; not only on Sinai has the soul of man heard the voice of the living God. The universal aspect of Judaism is even more strongly manifested in the observance of the penitential season. The Day of Memorial, which calls on us with trumpet blast to begin a new life, and the Day of Atonement, with its lessons of repentance and reconciliation, appeal to the common needs of all humanity. Will not these lessons strike us with deeper force when they are brought home to our hearts by observances which date back to the childhood of our race, and which are endeared to us by early association ? Our old ceremonial was

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created, not made. It arose from the needs of the people ; it adapted itself to those needs as they developed. Harvest festivities became national celebrations. At a later stage, the universal elements which unite nation with nation have gradually disentangled themselves, so as to gain recognition. Let us make the fullest use of the inheritance entrusted to us ; let us prefer to build up rather than to destroy.

There is another side of Judaism which must not be left out of account. Religious truth is the same for the whole world, but religious observance may well vary so as to adapt itself to local needs and national characteristics. This is especially true of Judaism. There is a Jewish nation as well as a Jewish Church. We feel ourselves united in sympathy with our brethren in all parts of the world. We share with them traditions of the same glorious past, the memories of martyrs and sages. Theirs and ours are Akiva and Hillel, Rashi and Gabirol, Maimonides, the philosopher, and Nachmanides, the mystic, who spoke of the testimonies before kings and was not ashamed. Our heart goes out to our brethren who suffer from oppression in other lands. We feel, if we are true to ourselves, that their troubles are ours also. We

acknowledge a sense of responsibility for the welfare of those who, seeking a refuge from persecution, have betaken themselves to this land of the free. Nay, this responsibility is forced on us, for our Gentile neighbours will not distinguish too nicely between the observant Jew and the indifferentist, and will not allow us to forget the old adage that "all Israel are hostages, one for the other." Some of us feel also that the dawn of a renewed national life for our race is now breaking, and that the Holy Land will be once more the centre of Jewish life.

I plead, therefore, for Jewish ceremonial as a means by which the racial tie is maintained. If the different sections of Jewry are to influence each other for good, they must not be allowed to drift apart. Many of our observances are valuable, because they strengthen the bond of brotherhood between Jew and Jew, keeping us distinct from other races, whilst not checking the most perfect sympathy with them. It is for this reason that the growing profanation of the Sabbath is so deplorable, particularly in cases where the culprits strain the conscience of others. It is very sad to see Jewish lads who are forced either to become Sabbath-breakers or to ruin their career from the out-

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set. If the Jewish Religious Union can succeed in lessening this great evil, it will have amply justified its existence.

I would appeal also for an increased zeal in studying our national language. The founders of this movement have acted rightly, I think, in establishing a mainly English service. There can be no Judaism without prayer ; and we have no right to shut out those who do not understand Hebrew from participating in public worship. Still it is not inconsistent to express a confident hope that the synagogue service of the future will be in Hebrew, and not in the vernacular. The Hebrew language is a bond that unites the Jewish race throughout the world. It has enabled the Jews, whatever the language of their daily life, to enjoy in common a literature of unexampled endurance. The Jewish language has done much to save the Jewish race from extinction. The Rabbis tell us that one of the reasons why Israel deserved to be redeemed from Egypt was because they had not changed their language. They remained Israelites although in a foreign land. Without the Hebrew tongue, the consciousness of Hebrew nationality would disappear. Let us therefore strive to make the study of Hebrew as general as possible. In this matter, as in many others,

true reform consists in revival and not in revolution.

Considering, therefore, both the universal and the national aspects of Judaism, we find ample cause for a return to more earnest observance. Doubtless, the Judaism of the future will differ from that of the past. We can no longer pray with sincerity for the restoration of the sacrificial system. The minute legalism of the Talmud can never be re-established. We can no longer tolerate ritual laws, such as those which the Rabbis themselves compare to "mountains hanging by a hair."¹ No doubt, in regard to religious observances, there has been a certain selection of the fittest, and there must continue to be so, but changes should be made cautiously, and even with reluctance. In any single case it is not certain that we are wiser than our ancestors, and we may find it more difficult to destroy their work than to replace it. On the other hand, we must not forget that conformity may arise from indolence and not from conviction :—

" Old things need not be therefore true,
O brother men, nor yet the new ;
Ah ! still awhile the old thought retain,
And yet consider it again."

¹ " Mishna Chagigah," i. 8.

One word in conclusion. We may differ—doubtless we must differ—in our conceptions of religious truth. I hope we are united in our love for Judaism. This love should be no vague sentiment ; it should be the guiding force of our lives. If this principle unites us, superficial differences matter little. Good men can never think exactly alike. Much will always remain uncertain ; many are the secret things which belong to the Lord our God. Surely, however, we Jews can better use our energies than by finding fault with each other, because our minds are not all formed according to the same pattern. Let us try to understand one another better, so that we may all be enabled to help our brethren to a loftier conception of life and duty. Then shall the glories of the unseen world of the Spirit be revealed to us. “The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.” For this let us pray ; for this let us live. Amen.

November 1, 1902.

IV

THE IMITATION OF GOD

"I was asleep, but my heart waked."—SONG OF SONGS, v. 2.

IN their context in the Song of Songs these beautiful words are put into a maiden's mouth, and describe her feelings as she rested after an agitated day. She had resisted the fascinations of the court ladies and a royal wooer, and had remained true to her rustic lover. "Could the curious helplessness of the dreamer in a dream, and the yearning of a maiden's affection, be more exquisitely expressed than in the words, 'I was asleep, but my heart waked'?" (Harper).

The haunting felicity of the words has not been destroyed by the allegorical interpretation to which the Song of Songs has been subjected. Jewish homilists have read into this text a recurrent phenomenon of Israel's religious history. Israel has often slept, but her heart has been awake. Her emotions, even her constancy, have been dormant, yet she has been sufficiently conscious to respond in a dreamy

way to a sympathetic touch, to answer back words of love to her lover. And though the sleep in which she at any period lies prone numb her activity, still so long as her heart wakes, her future cannot be altogether hopeless. The sleep may pass, and joyous activity arrive in its stead, when the lover wakes the sleeping beauty with his kiss.

If one lost faith in this belief, if one really were persuaded that Israel's heart had sunk into the torpor of death, it would be best to cease from unavailing efforts at restoring the departed animation. We must leave it to God to revive the dead. But, my friends, are we indeed in this sad case? Does our religion touch our heart so coldly that our life-blood is frozen within us? Is the Jew less susceptible than of old to the divine ideals? Is he callous to the tender memories of past fidelity and its accompanying joys? Can we to-day hear unmoved Jeremiah's exquisitely pathetic message to Israel: "Thus saith the Lord, I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals; how thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown"? We have seen more of God's love since Jeremiah wrote, and we have the more reason to go trustfully after Him. Like the Shulammite, Israel,

to-day, loyal and steadfast, may feel the dawn lighting up her life. She rubs her eyes, in bewilderment perhaps, as the sunshine begins to pour in on her, but she too exclaims in the mingled sadness of the night and exhilaration of the morning: "I was asleep, but my heart waked."

What was it that kept Israel's heart awake throughout the ages? The answer is threefold. Israel possessed a great ideal, Israel was conscious of it, Israel was faithful to it. Now it is true that our fathers often had one help to faith which we to-day in England have not. They were persecuted, we are free. They were driven from the present and thrown upon their memories and their hopes. Ours is a harder task, for we must construct a religious present for ourselves. Of old, the outcast of the street became a prince only in his home, when, in Heine's phrase, Princess Sabbath arrived on the scene and transformed him. But we are not outcasts, and so Princess Sabbath has not quite the same opportunity to work her charm. The world is open to us, we have fuller lives, and some of the things which interested and inspired our fathers make less appeal to us. But, after all, the change is more superficial than profound. Because we have a more vivid obligation in the present, have we no memories and no hopes?

Do we not possess the same great ideal, can we not become conscious of this ideal, can we not become more faithful to it?

First as to the ideal. That can be expressed in many ways, but here is one of the ways. A text of texts for the Jewish ideal is this sentence from the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus: "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." I am not referring to the *contents* of this momentous injunction, I am referring simply to its *form*. Let us omit on the present occasion all discussion of the meaning of holiness; let us merely observe the connection between the two parts of the sentence. "Ye shall be holy." Why? "For I the Lord your God am Holy." God says: Imitate Me, your God.

The Imitation of God: this has been the great Jewish ideal. It moved our fathers not only to piety, for piety may begin and end with pious etiquette, but it filled their lives with God. It ennobled them spiritually, it elevated them morally. It made them yearn for the ideal, it roused in them a passion for all the goodness which we call God. It worked on the mystic and excited him to emotional intensity; it inspired our rationalist philosophers of the middle ages; it affected the sober, commonplace individual, and lo! his life ceased to be common-

place. This principle—the imitation of God—is no cold formula, for it can interpret itself in the most glowing ways. As God is eternal, so must man let the eternal not the ephemeral rule his life. As it is the spirit that makes God, God, so is it the spirit that makes man, man. As God is a Unity, so must man be a unity ; one Godhead, one humanity, and a unity within each separate soul, making it wholly God's. And then the principle interprets itself in more tender, more humane ways in the Rabbinic theology. “Be like God,” said Abba Saul, “as He is merciful and gracious, so be thou merciful and gracious.” Or again: “Rabbi Chanina said, What is the meaning of the biblical command: Walk ye after the Lord your God? Is it possible for man to walk after the Shechina (divine presence)? Is it not already said, The Lord thy God is a consuming fire? But the meaning is, imitate the ways of the Holy One, Blessed be He. Just as we are told in Genesis that the Holy One clothed the naked—Adam and Eve—in the garden, so do thou clothe the naked ; just as the Holy One visited the sick, appearing unto Abraham when he was ailing, so do thou tend the sick ; just as we read in Deuteronomy that the Holy One buried the dead, interring Moses in the valley, so do thou bury the

dead." Observe the profundity, the ingenuity of this Rabbinic exegesis: from first to last, from Adam's days in the beginning to Moses' death in the end, from Genesis to Deuteronomy, the law, according to the Rabbi, bids you *Imitate God*.

Often and often the illustration turns on God's forbearance, His tolerance, His love. You will recall the legend of Abraham and his guest—a legend which, if not Jewish in authorship, is Jewish in spirit. Mr. G. A. Kohut has recently re-told the story. It tells how our father Abraham greeted an aged wayfarer, pressed his hospitality upon him, and feasted him with dainties; how the stubborn old man refused at Abraham's bidding to bless God for the food, and how Abraham in his zeal drove him out into the night. And at midnight God called unto Abraham: "Where's the stranger?" And Abraham answered and said, "Lord, he would not worship Thee, neither would he call upon Thy name, therefore have I driven the idolater out from before my face into the wilderness." And God said, "Have I borne with him these many long years, and nourished and clothed him, notwithstanding his rebellion against Me, and could'st not thou, that art thyself a sinner, bear with him for one night?" And Abraham said, "Let not Thy anger be hot against me, I have sinned, do

Thou forgive." And he arose and went forth into the wilderness, and sought diligently for the man, and found him. And he returned with him to his tent, and when he had treated him kindly he sent him away in the morning with gifts. Abraham in this apologue was quick to learn the lesson that man, made in the image of God, has no greater or more ennobling ideal than this : to imitate God. It is an ideal that cannot grow old, for we can keep it fresh by renewing and remaking our conception of God. It acts and reacts, it is an ideal that brings out our best, and wonderful to tell, our best when done ennoble the ideal that produced it : the more we seek to realise it, the more worth realising it becomes.

So far the ideal. Our second and third questions go together. Are we conscious of our ideal ; are we faithful to it ? This is our weakness. We are conscious of Judaism in a certain sense : too conscious. We retain our pride of race, but not our pride in God. We are not altogether unfaithful to our past, but we do not always choose aright in our objects for fidelity. We talk, and rightly talk, of linking ourselves with tradition, but we deliberately neglect that aspect of the tradition which is fullest of spiritual inspiration. The Rabbis had a theology as well as a discipline, and it was

the two together that made the Jew at once sane and impulsive. We are always fighting about the discipline, and we forget altogether the theology. Such phrases as the one we are now discussing, "The Imitation of God," is one that we should not so lightly let go. It made the Jew moral, for the God he aspired to imitate was moral; but it made him religious in the truest sense, touching his morality with emotion, for his God stood also as the type of love. Hence the Jew, I repeat, was at once so sane and so impulsive. We are losing, fast losing, this combination of characteristics. We are so anxious to seem sane that we are afraid of our religious impulses. We are so anxious not to seem hysterical that we prefer torpor. We keep our hearts chained up. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul for the living God." So said the Psalmist. But we do not like panting. We breathe deliberately. "O God, my God, earnestly do I seek thee, my soul thirsts for thee, my flesh pines for thee (as) in a dry and fainting land where no water is." So said another Psalmist. Are we in truth the spiritual heirs of the men who said and felt these 'things? Unless we are prepared to be ousted from our heritage, we must set about recovering the lost fire, we

must reclaim our lost emotions. That is the first thing needful. We must learn to feel "the sure and blissful sense of God's presence."

Because such ideas have been misapplied, have led to a false mysticism, a false morality, are we to let them go, when we could use them for a true communion, an ennobled, a spiritualised morality? That is why I have used this expression of the ideal of Judaism: *the Imitation of God*. As the phrase fell upon your ears, some of you will have thought of another phrase, alas! more familiar, I fear—the *Imitation of Christ*. But the Bible, the Rabbis had the idea thousands of years before Thomas à Kempis wrote his sublime meditations. And by just so much as our ideal is greater than his, by just so much as the one perfect God is above any human character that history has seen or romance conceived, by just so much more must we hold to our own Jewish ideal of an imitable though unattainable Ideal, and refuse to surrender the higher because there has been a lower. We have too often abandoned our most precious possessions from a false delicacy, an ignorant timidity.

The Imitation of God! Before you can imitate you must admire, you must love, you must be conscious of the nearness of the

exemplar. And that, again, is why we have hope in these afternoon services of ours. We come here to pray, and praying is all too rare with us. Oh they pray in the East End Chevra ; yes, they pray there ; how fervently, how consciously of God's nearness, we know right well. But it is *they* who pray there ; but where do *we* pray ? What is prayer but the realisation of the nearness of God ? It means that we are conscious that God is something vital to us, that there is something else in life besides its sordid needs and their sordid satisfaction, for not by bread alone doth man live, but by all that cometh from the mouth of the Lord. We possess a great ideal, the greatest ideal the world has ever had, this pure, this spiritual, this moral, this potent conception of the nature and character of God, and our hearts must be aglow with emotion, love warming us, rousing us to a sense of what Israel stood for in the early religious struggles of men towards the truth, to a sense of what Israel may and must stand for in the present. Imitating God, each one of us may be by his life and his holy joy a missionary, bringing men and women to the God of Israel. No longer must we repose in that half slumber, sweetly and pathetically

described by the Shulammite: "I was asleep, but my heart waked"—but we must be fully awake, body and soul, ready to answer the call of Isaiah, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion."

November 8, 1902.

V

COMMUNION WITH GOD

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."—Ps. xxv. 14.

It is pleasing to observe that scholars appear to agree in the rendering of this particular verse. There is a marginal note in the Revised Version which suggests that the word "secret" might be rendered by the word "counsel" or "friendship," and elsewhere I find it translated "communion." It seems tolerably clear, therefore, that the familiar phrase, "the secret of the Lord" conveys to the ordinary mind what is intended by the original Hebrew text. We all understand what is meant when we speak of the "secret" of a discovery, or the secret of an idea. It may appear to some persons a strange expression, "the secret of the Lord." But when we think about it there is a singular privacy or secret in the religious life. It is lived apart from the gaze of men. One of the objects of public worship is to bring

together in fellowship those who are bound by the very strong tie which we may call the secret of religion. If there were no public worship, it would not at all follow that there would be no religion. But it might follow that the worship of God would have a different effect on the individual who practised it always alone. But this is not the aspect of the matter for which I ask your consideration now.

The religious life itself—faith in God, the habitual consciousness of His presence, and the power of prayer or communion with Him, have a secret of their own. And it is a secret of a kind very hard indeed to reveal to anybody who seems to be without it. This natural reserve about religion also exists in relation to other things. All non-material pursuits have their secret too. Persons who are not addicted to intellectual habits may not easily perceive the delight of any one of them. Art too has its secret. And although music in some way or other is understood and cared for by more people than any other single branch of art, or by a larger number of people perhaps than any one branch of intellectual activity; yet there are intricacies of harmony and of orchestration presenting an extraordinary charm to those who understand them, but having no

meaning whatever to the uninitiated. You cannot explain the beauty and the interest of that wonderful five-fugued chorus of Sebastian Bach to a person who cannot read music. It would be true then to say of it that its secret is with them who understand it, or who have been moved by it. The limitations of the individual understanding, or of the capacity for study, are somewhat sharply defined in several subjects. Even if we had the capacity, life would be too short to master everything about them which has an interest for us. Religion, however, unlike any branch of art or any single department of the intellectual life, does from its very nature concern every human being, and is capable, to use a rather hackneyed phrase, of appealing to anybody. And yet, with all its universal concern and its unlimited appeal, it nevertheless has its secret. It not merely has its secret, but it is strangely distinguished by that very feature.

We might realise that it would be poor comfort to tell a person who was what is called an agnostic or an atheist that the religious idea has a secret. One can imagine that an attempt to convert such a one to religion would be baffled if his negative arguments were met with the word secret. A secret sometimes means

darkness, a closed door, something which is impenetrable, and therefore unlikely to be proved by language. But in the sense in which the Psalmist is understood to use the word, darkness is certainly not the meaning of it. It would seem to be used rather in the sense in which one might speak of the secret of some rare friendship. Two persons may be drawn together by an unspeakable tie of sympathy and affection. There is an affinity between them. Their opinions and their creed may be different, and they may have no tie of blood, and yet they have been drawn together through a long series of years, almost a lifetime, in a way that is not very common even among near relations. The secret of such a friendship is understood by themselves, and perhaps by no one else. "What can he or she find in so-and-so to care so very much about?" the casual onlooker might remark. Yet it is a friendship which abides through all manner of changes in the conditions of either of them. I may remark incidentally that perhaps such perfect types of friendship are more possible to persons of religious life than to others. It is conceivable that the close and constant intercourse with the Divine Being has for one of its effects a quickening of the human affec-

tions. It is probably true that the cultivated sense of God's nearness may bring nearer to us those who are also sensible of it. Putting aside this digression, I would suggest that the "secret of the Lord" is a secret of a kind that can be compared to the human experience of a true friendship. The real secret in that case is of course love, whatever may have been the incidents or the accidents which first prompted the friendship. I remember being told by an eminent Oxford theologian¹ of a past generation, no longer with us, that it seemed to him that it had been a special fiat of the Almighty that He had elected to reveal Himself to the human understanding primarily through the channel of love, and that He would consent to be made known on no other terms. I naturally observed that this idea was the very basis and inspiration of the Jewish religion. Upon that point there can be no divergence between one age or one condition of Judaism and another. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might," are words which are identified with the profession of belief in the Unity of God. The Shema Yisrael must ever stand as the imperishable corner-stone of our faith, as the Ten

¹ The late Canon Liddon.

Commandments are the basis of the world's civilisation.

Thus the secret of the Lord may be described as the secret of a great and everlasting love—a love so strong and so deep that it cannot be fully apprehended until it has been lived and experienced. Hence the secret of it. There are many applications of this sublime truth ; but at this moment it is enough to contemplate one of them. The habit of communion with God, in the experience of those who give themselves to it, reveals certain truths which are not otherwise perceptible. One of those truths is that we are all of us—whether we know or not—dependent upon a power other than our own. Whilst it is true in a sense that the will is free, that the possibilities of human endeavour are great, and that certain achievements are within the grasp of most people, yet we are fettered if we rely upon our own unaided efforts. But it is not enough to learn that we are of ourselves helpless, we require to find the source of help. The life with God, or the religious life, marks out all along the line the signposts or the tokens of His power. Among the cherished records of the great Hebrew prophets we are made acquainted with their secret experiences. We are taken into their confidence,

as it were. The sayings of such men, which have sunk into the human heart, are just the expressions of their own personal secret life with God. For instance, in the Book of Micah it is written, "When I fall, I shall arise ;" "when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me ;" "He will bring me forth to the light ; and I shall behold His righteousness ;" or, "I will look unto the Lord ; I will wait for the God of my salvation ; my God will hear me." And we read elsewhere, in the 94th Psalm, "Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had soon dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth, Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul." These are personal experiences which seem mysterious, yet they are very real to those who have known them. And we can all know them more or less, according to the measure of our personal intimacy with our Creator. "Personal intimacy with the Creator !" you may exclaim. "What an extraordinary expression. What can it mean ? How can you be intimate with the Creator ?" Yes, intimate ! in continual personal intercourse. The genius of religion, and particularly of the Jewish religion, is that it discloses to us the fact that there is a personal,

conscious relation of unspeakable love between the individual and his God. This relation is, however, dependent upon the effort on our part to make it conscious and living. God is ever near to us, if we are willing to be near to Him. The relationship is, in the sense of the Psalmist, private, that is personal. An unknown writer has expressed it thus: "God is as near to each human soul as if it alone existed in immensity." This may be called the great mystery of religion, but it is also its most potent truth. Unless there were this strong invisible tie between the individual and his God, religion would be chiefly a dream. It could not have that binding effect which the word implies. It is the immanence of God which has been so signally experienced by the great souls of all ages, and which has marked Israel as the "witness," the "servant," the "messenger," and "teacher." We ourselves who are Israelites should be poor successors of our ancestors if we were indifferent to this truth. We may help one another to assimilate it.

In our relations with those who are near to us as friends, or as members of the same household, it is possible, without much speaking on the subject, to let them into our religious confidence, if the "secret of the Lord" be ours.

You can read in the "Life and Letters of James Martineau," recently published, a striking passage on this point, in a letter addressed to a Jewish friend. It was written when Martineau was in the ninety-second year of his age. It is thus the matured personal experience of a man of rare intellectual genius and of the highest spiritual culture. His words are these: "The immediate witness of God and of all the divine truth that concerns us is in our own hearts, and can pass from heart to heart by faithful and sympathetic interpretation. . . ."

There is a profound human truth in the odd Jewish saying, sometimes scoffed at, seldom estimated at its higher worth: "I observe this or that religious rite because of my father, or because of my mother;" or, "I do these things with my father's heart or my grandfather's heart." In the slipshod criticism of such sentiments, the high philosophy behind them is apt to be overlooked even by the speaker himself. If you have known some one near to you who was a devout Israelite, you have a cogent reason for being yourself a devout Israelite. The pattern and the imitation are part of the magnetism of human character.

It was pointed out in this place two weeks

ago by a valued colleague, that the imitation of God was the ideal of the Jewish religion, and a far higher ideal than the later one which is associated with Thomas à Kempis. There is nothing more certain in the history of religious thought than this: Those who are most closely in touch with the Divine springs of conduct are the first to receive in their own secret cells of thought the true revelation of the Divine nature. God is always manifesting Himself to the purified heart, to the chastened spirit, to the disciplined will. And therefore it is that in religion, unlike other spheres, the finding only *really* comes after the searching. If you were to miss one day to pray and to meditate, your spiritual perception would be lulled and chilled. Prayer must be constant, it dare not be merely occasional. If we speak upon religion to one another, as in this place, we are bound *not* to be too reticent. There is often a dulness in prayer which arises from being at the moment out of touch with God Himself. The self-same service will be a delight to one and a weariness to another, just because of the temporary difference in the attitude of the two hearts. Nobody who is convinced of the deepest religious truths can demonstrate them to a mind which is unattuned to them. He can only point the way, and

so to speak, beckon to his fellow-men. Each soul *must* discover for itself the inexhaustible springs of joy and peace and rectitude and strength. *These* constitute the secret of the Lord, which is with them that fear Him.

November 22, 1902.

VI

RELIGIONS AND RELIGION

THERE is a famous distich of Schiller's which runs as follows :—

“What religion it is that I profess, do you ask me?
None of all these you have named. And why? Because
of religion.”

Many of us, when we read those lines, are attracted by them. They seem to be one of those excellent paradoxes which contain a large quantity of truth. In all the great religions, we argue, there is an approximation to infinite reality. Each, amid much that is unnecessary and false and crude, includes and presents many aspects of the truth. None possess the whole. He who would be truly impartial and religious must open his ears to the excellence of every faith. He must cull the honey from many flowers. He must gather the good from all creeds, but show no exclusive partiality to any. He must be the friend of a number; the lover of none. Because I would be truly religious, I

cannot label myself with any separating name. The wind of God must blow upon me whence it will.

I do not know if I am right in thinking that the epigram of Schiller, thus interpreted and expounded, does appeal to many. I do not know if I am right in thinking that it is probably no less attractive now, at the opening of the twentieth century, than when it was first written at the close of the eighteenth century. One cannot read far into other people's souls; one can but guess and conjecture. I venture to guess that one reason why there are persons who sit loosely to Judaism to-day is because, even though they have never heard of Schiller's epigram, they are yet, consciously or unconsciously, influenced by its doctrine.

I propose to-day to give suggestions which may tend to show that, for most of us, the epigram is dangerous and unsatisfactory.

Religion without qualification is too vast and vague for our use and edification. It may even be doubted how far, in the world of man, unqualified religion has any actual existence. Language doubtless gives no adequate illustration, yet even this imperfect analogy it is, perhaps, not unfair to use. There are many languages, but there is no one general language.

A universal language for all is a mere hot-house artificiality. We may learn, and we should learn, many languages, but one only is our own. That one we know best and we love best. We may even say that those who could express themselves with absolutely equal facility in two languages, would probably not be extremely excellent in either. Or, with another application of the metaphor, we may say that only he who is proficient in his own tongue can properly appreciate the beauty of another.

But such an illustration tends to run away from us. Let me indicate my drift with another. If there is any meaning or value in cosmopolitanism, it is only as an inclusive, not as an exclusive, term. You must have one real country before you can have many. You must be especially at home in one place before you can be very fairly well at home in a number of places. Philanthropy begins with the love of parent and mother and friend; the love of man includes them and does not destroy them. Using these analogies for what they are worth, one might already say that, even if there be any truth in that general religiousness of which Schiller's epigram seems to speak, it should only come at the end of a mature religious development, and it should not exclude, but include a close

attachment to the particular faith from which we made our start.

Religion is not only individual, but it is also social. It unites us with, as it also divides us from, our fellows. As mankind falls into groups in language, race, and nationality, so it also falls into groups as regards religion. The man who has no nation is not the richer but the poorer. So, too, is he who has no religious community or brotherhood. His religious life is not richer but poorer. He has no point of departure and no home. He has no leverage or anchor.

An historic creed exercises a certain momentum or impulse upon those who feel in conscious communion with it. It imparts of its own bigger life to its members : they draw sustenance from it, and strengthen it at one and the same time. The branch which is cut from the tree withers. But the tree is made up of its leaves.

My point, then, is that for our own religious life, as well as for the religious life of others, it is of importance, and even of necessity, to belong to a definite religious organisation. It has been said that the best way to appreciate womanhood is to love one particular woman. The best way to appreciate religion in general is to belong to and care for one definite religion in particular. Therefore, assuming that we do not desire to

join another faith, we shall do well to be ardent in our own. Mere negation is not enough. There are some Jews whose religious creed seems to consist in a denial of the Incarnation and the Trinity. You cannot live on negations. It is a poor faith which can only say of itself that it is not another. You are not an Englishman by merely not being a Dane or a Greek; you are only then an Englishman to any purpose and significance when you fulfil the duties, and exercise the rights, of citizenship or nationality. Religion, like nationality, must be realised in affirmations. It is something definite, something positive.

We are, then, *for our own sakes* to be Jews in more than name. We are to be Jews in some other way than by merely being born Jews, and in some other way than by merely not being Christians. On another occasion I may speak to you about the duties and claims of our children, of our community, of mankind. To-day in few but earnest words I would speak to you of yourselves. We shall be better and fuller men and women if we are more religious men and women; we can—or to be safe, let me say—most of us can, only become religious, and practise and possess religion, by a Jewish medium, a Jewish channel. The object of this Union,

which we want you to join not merely by attending its services, but also by becoming regular members, is to help us to find and realise one or more of these Jewish media or Jewish channels. By providing services which in themselves will, it is hoped, bring some of us nearer to God, and for an hour a week open the doors of that communion with the Father which some of us find clogged by disuse, by worldly cares, by forgetfulness, by shyness or by indifference, we may also be able to put before ourselves aspects of Judaism which it will do us good to hear and know of. Its mission, its value, its essence, its adaptability, may be dwelt upon and explained to us, and by these explanations we may be able to add fuel and strength and vitality to our own personal and individual religion. Judaism is in the first instance for *us*; it lives in us and for us. We help to make it: it helps to make us.

It will not be always—it has, even so far as we have yet gone, not been always—the same view of Judaism, the same aspects, the same interpretation of it, which we shall hear. Within certain wide limits, Judaism, if it is to be the living religious mother of widely different men and women, must be an elastic religion. If it were not that we believed it to be elastic, this

Union would not have been established. The word elastic is easily parodied, and it is very cheap to say that an elastic religion is one which can be made to suit everybody's convenience. But what on the theoretic side we mean by an elastic religion is just this, that three hundred different men and women can all honestly accept it and profit by it and live by it. And what, on the practical side, we mean by elastic is that the outward embodiment of the religion can be so varied as to give spiritual sustenance and kindle religious emotion in all sorts of different men and women, with different natures, upbringings, characters, endowments, and opinions. Thus we shall not always hear exactly the same interpretation of Judaism, the same stress on the same portions, because if we did, it would, I imagine, only be one group of worshippers who could greatly profit by what they might hear. A preacher may, perhaps, if he be very able, *interest all* his auditors ; but he can only hope and expect that a group or proportion of them will be in such general sympathy with his point of view, and so receptive of it, that his arguments will go home and influence the life. But by slightly varying the point of view and the emphasis, first one and then another group may be reached and helped.

We have to bring into our own individual lives the force, the religious momentum, of an historical religion. I lay stress upon this. Religion by itself is, we have seen, too vast and general for us. We do not want it diluted, but we need it, in a sense, particularised; it must have a name, a label, a history, a mission, a brotherhood, a form. So only can we make it properly and fully our own. To be ardent in religion, most of us must be ardent Jews. If the Judaism disappear, there is great likelihood that the religion will fade away likewise. We cannot wholly stand by ourselves: religious isolation means, to most persons, gradual religious impoverishment. The historic religion must become *our* religion, and we must help to carry that historic religion on, to maintain it and develop it. Past generations have helped to make Judaism; but Judaism is never made: if it is alive, it is perpetually growing, developing, expanding here, contracting there. This growth, this life which we are to make is also to make us. We must take it into our own lives, and in that shape and guise religion will be to us a moving force and a vital reality. Judaism will supply us with the religious forms which few of us can wholly do without; it will quicken our religious life by the larger religious

life of a community and a brotherhood. It will make us partners in a definite religious work, a religious goal, distant but not shadowy, to be prayed for, thought for, lived for. As we become more conscious and more eager in our Judaism, so too, and in the same proportion, it is to be hoped and even expected, will our own personal religious life with God, the life which is partly expressed in prayer, partly in the sense of God's presence, partly in the tone and colour and stamp of our moral and civic, as of our outward and inward life, be quickened and deepened as well.

But before I finish, a word to avoid misunderstanding. Do not think that Judaism is only that which is purely and solely characteristic of Jews; the rites and tenets which they, and they alone, practise and believe. Just as Judaism is no mere negation, so it is not merely that which is special. Just because Judaism is or claims to be a universal, a catholic religion, does it not lose its identity because others, who do not bear its name or grasp its flag, yet share its doctrines. I want you to take this, if you agree with me, very warmly to heart. It seems to me so important that I do not mind repeating myself or dwelling upon the matter in print and in preaching, on week-days and on Sabbaths. These general doctrines, such as the love of

God, or the possibility of communion with Him, are of the essence of Judaism. We are to vitalise them for our own lives by calling them Jewish. We are to live by them, and work for them, under that chosen title and designation. They *are* the doctrines which this historic religion, this particular form and embodiment of religion, has taught and developed. They are ours. Never mind if they are also Theistic, Unitarian, or Christian. Be glad that doctrines which you cherish and hold dear are cherished and held dear by others as well as by yourselves. But do not any the less consider them Jewish, and view them in a Jewish light. Let Judaism as a historic and living force play upon these general doctrines, sustain them, environ and illumine them. You are not the less a Jew because *these* doctrines are to you the central elements of Judaism rather than the habit of separating the sexes in synagogue or of singing without an organ. You are none the less a Jew because you think that these general doctrines are the real essence of Judaism. I venture to go even further and say you are all the more. Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah at any rate would claim you as their disciple; and this test may suffice you.

For, of a truth, these general doctrines of

religion and morality are to be all the more vitally and powerfully your own, because you hold them as Jews and regard them as the essence of Judaism. It is very difficult, and it is hardly accurate, to separate and mark off the provinces of the moral and religious life, for the two are closely interconnected. Religion is something over and above morality, but morality is to be throughout coloured and deepened by religion. Now if religion needs, as it were, to be made definite and historic in order to exercise its full force upon the mind and heart and will of the average man and woman, it is also true that our moral lives and characters are likely to be strengthened and improved by our attachment and conscious loyalty to a particular historic creed. Once more we may use our parallel of nationality. There is doubtless a general human ideal of goodness and righteousness, but this general ideal is made more keen and urgent by being, as it were, split up into a variety of national ideals to whose appeal and summons we more eagerly and gladly respond. The ideal Englishman includes much that is common to him with the ideal German and the ideal Dane ; but because it is part of *his* ideal, the Englishman seeks to act up to it more eagerly—it moves him more readily—than if it

were merely the common ideal of all humanity. Nelson's signal appealed to every heart at Trafalgar far more insistently than if it had merely said, "Ideal humanity or morality expects that every man shall do his duty."

But as there are varieties of national ideals, so there are varieties of moral and religious ideals. Judaism, like other religions, has its own distinctive moral and religious ideal. It lays special stress on certain doctrines, combines them in special ways, sets them in a special light. Those who are brought up in Judaism learn these ideals half unconsciously, but they are not adequately learned by such a method. We cannot all be students of the best thoughts and ideals of Judaism in the past, but it is the duty of the select few, the Scholars and the Teachers, to make these ideals more accessible to us, so that they can act upon and influence our lives. Perhaps this Jewish Religious Union may be able to do something also in this direction, so that the moral and religious genius of Judaism may become more known to its own children, and make them keener in their loyalty, and nobler in their lives. And if the following of such ideals, if loyalty to Judaism impose upon us some measure of sacrifice, we ought to be able to say, with sincerity and gladness, "So much

the better!" For the fulfilment of such sacrifice will strengthen our character and vitalise our faith. We shall have a richer, not a poorer, religion if we become more Jewish in the sense of knowing more about Judaism. The general religious ideas of which I have spoken have received, in the course of centuries, special interpretations. They gain body and substance from their Jewish presentment. If we know and cherish them *in* that presentment, they will occupy more space, so to speak, among the moving ideas of our lives; they will be more frequently and forcibly present to consciousness; they will dominate and control our action more effectively. Other things being equal, our larger knowledge and love of Judaism may help to make us better men and women, possessed of a deeper and more potent love both to man and to God. It is no necessary sign of breadth or of culture or of enlightenment to have no definite religious home. He who has no particular country of his own is not for that reason a more fervent lover of mankind. He who has no particular religion is not for that reason a more fervent lover of God.

November 29, 1902.

VII

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE text for this sermon might be found in two familiar Hebrew words, ושננתם לבניך.

These words occur in the Book of Deuteronomy, in the seventh verse of the [sixth chapter. We commonly translate: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." Every detail about so famous a passage as the *Shema* is interesting, and therefore you may like to be told that the verb in its applied sense, and in the *Piel* form, is only found in this single instance. The verb literally means to "sharpen," and therefore seems, in its metaphorical application, to signify to *inculcate*, to *impress*. The Germans have precisely the same metaphor in the word "einschärfen." We might translate: "Thou shalt impress them upon, or prick them into thy children." From very early times Judaism has always insisted on the importance of teaching. It has always contained, and laid emphasis upon, an intellectual element in re-

ligion. "Study," in the paradoxical words of the Rabbis, "study must precede doing, because study leads to doing, but doing does not lead to study." Secondly, Judaism has insisted, from early times, upon the importance of the family. These two points, the family and teaching, are combined in the injunction, *ושננתם לבניך*, "And thou shalt impress them upon thy children."

Doubtless both these points have varied in their history and application. The intellectual element in religion may be regarded in different ways; like other true and good things it may be perverted. It may lead to aridity and commonplace; it may destroy enthusiasm and emotion. But it yet remains a great element of the truth; we, too, in our generation, have to learn it. Religion needs the mind; it needs thought and study, as well as ardour and love. The particular place of the intellect in religion, what and how we have to study, the problems we have to deal with—each age must answer for itself. Where Jewish students, or rather Jewish teachers, so often fail is that they learn the answers of past ages to past problems, but hide their ears and envelop their minds from the questions and problems of to-day.

So, too, as regards the children and the family. Judaism must still live through the family, but

how religion in the family is to be taught and maintained, this each generation must settle for itself. The mere attempt to maintain a past from which the present has become gravely different is inadequate ; but to ignore the present with its insistent claims is far worse. The old order may be no longer valid, but the ideal of the old order may still remain the ideal of to-day. The principles laid down by Maimonides in his code-book with regard to children are in many respects our principles still. But we should not, for instance, agree with him in his Oriental distinctions between boys and girls, about the use of the small strap, or about the impropriety of holidays. I propose to leave the question of the intellectual element in religion for another occasion ; to-day I would venture to speak about our duty to our children.

If I was right in urging that the average man and woman needs a special religion in order that religion may come to its rights, that he needs a particular historic religion in order that religion may play as full and good a part as religion can play in his actions and character, surely this is all the more true of children. Mere generalities will not suffice for them, they need the warmth and colour of an historic faith. They must be brought up as members of a

definite religious organisation. It will not do for them merely to feel that they are *not* members of the religion of the majority. They must feel that they *are* members of their own religion far more acutely than that they are *not* members of another. The consciousness that they are not Christians will never impel them to lives of honour and continence and charity; it will not help them in their spiritual life; it will not make their prayers more regular, more real, more vivid.

The consciousness of Judaism with its history and its claims, its meaning and its responsibilities, may do all these things. You would not tell children to be philanthropists. They are to love their parents, their brothers and sisters, their relations, their friends, their teachers; you give them definite and defined objects for their love and devotion. They learn to love by loving, by loving particular persons. They must learn to love God through the medium and with the help of the religious practices and rites of a *particular* religion. In all sorts of ways religion and God will be made more living and real to them by their being taught the tenets, and living in the atmosphere of a particular historic faith. Now, two more degrees of urgency may rightly be noted. If the argument would be true for

Christian children, it is all the more urgent for Jewish children, and if it was true for Jewish children fifty years ago, it is all the more urgent for Jewish children to-day.

We have to remember the prevailing environment in which our children live. Their nurses, their governesses, their tutors, their schools are seldom Jewish. The books they read, the stories they are told, the history they learn, have rarely to do with Judaism or Jews. The great buildings they are taken to see, the abbeys and cathedrals, are dedicated to the service of another creed. Unless all this mass of influence is carefully directed and controlled, difficulties and strange results are likely to ensue. I am not referring to the fear lest the child should acquire a secret longing to know more of Christian doctrine and Christian worship. There is a more subtle and more probable danger than this. It is that the child may become cool and indifferent to all religions alike, ignorant of their powers and beatitudes. He observes a large number of his neighbours and schoolfellows attending churches and chapels. But his parents attend no place of worship. Perhaps no synagogue is available where he or they happen to live; perhaps its services are so discordant with their ideas and ideals that they find no satisfaction in sharing

them. The child knows that most people go to a religious worship which he vaguely understands or believes to be not only not the faith of his parents, but a faith which is somehow or other undesirable and false.

Perhaps the grave error is made of speaking with some lightness or easy criticism of Christian dogma in the very presence of the child. Is it not likely that, if there be no important counterbalancing influences, the child will come to think that religious rites and religious worship are matters of secondary significance? His parents seldom talk about religion; their lives are little influenced by it; the people who are religious are those who believe in a religion which is false and perhaps even just a little absurd. Yet the child loves his parents; he thinks them very wise and superior people. He is unable to distinguish between outward and inward religion. They who are indifferent to, or take no part in religious worship, will not seem to him, even if in truth they are, keen about the religion of the spirit and the heart. Hence religion will seem to him largely identified with false religion; his wise and superior parents get along admirably without it. Oh, Jewish fathers and mothers, is this the horrible condition of mind and soul which you are allowing your children to attain?

Nor are we even yet at the end of the story or the muddle. The child vaguely knows that his parents do not believe in Christianity, but he is also aware that their opposition to it is by no means of the fighting order. Tolerance is the order of the day. His father seems more interested in politics than in religion. He is a keen Liberal or an active Tory. He attends meetings to make Liberals more eager in their faith, or to convert them to Toryism. He attends no meetings to make Jews more eager Jews or to convert Christians to Judaism. It seems to the child to matter to which side in politics a man belongs; it does not matter to which religion he belongs. Most persons belong to a false religion, but it makes no difference. The child's dearest friends or his parents' dearest friends are probably Christians, to say nothing of his nurses, his tutors, and his masters. If he goes to a non-Jewish school—and most Jewish boys and girls of the upper and upper-middle classes go to such schools nowadays—the environment and influence are once more of a character likely, unless great care be taken, to produce strange or irreligious results.

Some parents are so extraordinarily lax and foolish as to allow their children habitually to attend the religious worship of a creed which

the children at the same time are instructed to disbelieve. Is it conceivable that any course could possibly be adopted more directly calculated to produce religious hypocrisy or religious indifference? Even if the children attend no such worship, they are likely, unless adequate special instruction is provided for them in their own faith, or unless their home life is most carefully arranged from a religious point of view, to consider that the secular side of life is far more important than the religious side of life. It is even unfortunate that such a cleavage should become apparent at all. The very genius of Judaism is against it. Religion is not to be something apart, but an interfused and interpenetrating spirit. There is to be *no* secular side of life: all is to be sanctified; the glory of God is to hover over all.

But if this intermingling cannot be, how dangerous it is if religion tends to be regarded as an extra, neither very elegant nor very important. Arithmetic and Latin are clearly much more important than Judaism and religion. For Judaism says: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." But so important are arithmetic and Latin that it is better in the parents' eyes for the child to break the Sabbath rest than to miss his stated lessons in Latin and arithmetic.

Do you imagine that, consciously or unconsciously, the child draws no deductions from premises such as these? Now many of the difficulties and even of the incongruities which have here been described are often almost inevitable. We have to live in a non-Jewish environment. Our literature, our schools, our teachers, must be prevailingly Christian. It is also true that, to many of us, the synagogue services are extremely unattractive and extremely unsuitable for children.

Thus the divorce between the secular and the religious sides of life is largely and frequently inevitable. But what is the inference? That we are to drift and do nothing? To acknowledge that it is all very difficult and awkward, to lament that there is no remedy or help? Surely not. The inference rather is that we must give the more care and the more thought to supply in our own homes what is necessarily lacking outside them. *Judaism must be preserved in the home.* School and synagogue no longer suffice. Now, when one speaks of the home, one is, here, too, often met with a statement of obstacles and difficulties. I would not exaggerate by denying these, but I would claim that they, too, should not be exaggerated. For if there are difficulties in the home, it must

be admitted that there are great opportunities as well. For in the home is liberty. There we are in full control. Within certain wide limits we can do what we like. We can create our own atmosphere, we can talk of what we please and as we please. We can observe what religious forms we will. We can teach our children whatever religious doctrines we think best and truest. We can arrange our domestic services as we please. Much Hebrew, little Hebrew, no Hebrew, short prayers or long, seldom or often, Friday evening or Saturday morning, or both, daily services or weekly, hymns or no hymns—our freedom is absolute and uncontrolled.

All the greater is our responsibility, all the greater our fault, if we let things drift without goal or aim. We must make ourselves alive to the importance of the situation, to the good we may effect, to the evil we may cause, to the grave issues which are at stake. Primarily our children, but also our community and society at large—all these will be affected by what we do, or neglect to do, within the doors and privacy of our homes. What, then, are we going to do for our children within the home? I put school questions on one side. If there is a settled policy in the home, it is probable that some effort will

be made to prevent the school counteracting home influences and methods. In and from the home the child starts ; to the home the child returns ; what is taught and what is not taught, still more what is felt and not felt, what is inferred and not inferred, in the home is of primary and permanent importance.

The first requirement is Time. The parents must consider religion and Judaism adequately themselves ; they must talk over these subjects together, and above all things avoid drifting and *laissez faire*. Religion should occupy quite as much time in their thoughts and conversation as the cook or the washing, perhaps even as the two combined. Let them not be shy with themselves or with each other. Let them not be afraid to communicate to each other their religious doubts and anxieties. The most sacred subjects, it is sometimes said, least bear talking about. Much may be felt where little is said. But it is also true that what is never talked about may be driven away from consciousness and memory ; silence may lead to neglect, neglect to atrophy. The pressure of the world and of things material may cause the things of the spirit to be forgotten and ignored.

We cannot avoid responsibility by living from hand to mouth. Our children's souls will be

equally affected and we shall equally be called to book for them. If we desecrate the Sabbath, not by work, which may be, I do not by any means say that it always is, unavoidable, but by pleasure—false pleasure—it is just the same if that desecration be deliberate policy or un-intelligent thoughtlessness. The results will be the same in either case, and if there be an account after death for our doings upon earth, the judgment will surely be the same likewise.

If father and mother should not be shy between themselves, they should not be shy towards their children; neither shy nor impatient. While Religion and Judaism must not be common or familiar in the wrong sense of the word, we must not be too afraid or too busy to talk, as occasion and opportunity demand, of these solemn and sacred subjects. Just as in morality, it is all important to make the children realise that we, like them, are under the dominion of conscience and the moral law, that over both them and parents alike rules and reigns “the Invisible Third”—Eternal Righteousness or the Divine Will—so, in the sphere of religion, must they realise that religion, with its manifestations, prayer above all, is not something for children only, but for everybody, and that we are all children in the sight and in the presence of God.

Then there comes the question of forms and of Hebrew. Every household must settle that question for itself. As regards Hebrew, I still maintain that it is consistent and reasonable to agitate for more English in the synagogue service, and at the same time to teach our children an adequate amount of Hebrew. But the subject needs more time than at the fag end of an address I can give to it here. As regards forms, we have to remember the truth of the commonplace that if the grown-up man and woman can pass through forms to dispense with forms, the child cannot straightway reach the goal without passing through the course. For children, at least, it is true what Butler has declared to be true of grown-ups as well: "The form of religion may indeed be there where there is little of the thing, but the thing itself cannot be preserved without the form." Most important of all forms are the Sabbath and Prayer. The Sabbath needs a sermon to itself and more than one. Here I would only say that whatever may have to be done on the score of livelihood, profession, or work is one thing; whatever is done for amusement is quite another.

The Sabbath eve—that admirable and beautiful feature of the Jewish Sabbath—need scarcely

be desecrated on the plea of necessity. There is no necessity to go to the theatre or to a dinner-party upon Friday evening; there is no necessity to play cards on Friday evening; there is no necessity to leave the home, or to have outsiders within it upon Friday evening. If children are to infer that a dinner-party is more important than religion and Judaism, how can you expect them to grow up with any devotion to either? For those households, the members of which necessity separates upon Saturday mornings, Friday evening is an appropriate and convenient occasion for domestic prayers and family worship. Upon these domestic services I would lay the greatest stress. It is our fault if they do not help or satisfy our children and ourselves, for we can arrange them as we will. By them we can maintain the Jewish consciousness, and the Jewish and historic continuity. Nothing must be suffered to interfere with them, wherever there is no opportunity to attend the synagogue, or wherever the synagogue service would, in the opinion of the parents, be less religiously efficacious and desirable. Family prayer is something between public and private prayer, and may be made to partake of the sanctity of both. Private prayer is likely to fall into desuetude if family prayer is neglected; the need for

public prayer will be maintained if family prayer is faithfully observed.

The times are critical; the need is great. Upon each family, upon every household, a solemn responsibility falls. Now more than ever, it is the home within which, and through which, Judaism must be preserved. It is partly for us to say whether our children are to become men and women whose lives the love of God and the realisation of His presence are to fashion and to control, or whether indifference, materialism, and worldliness are to be their masters and their gods.

December 13, 1902.

VIII

RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

THE Books of Chronicles contain several curious and picturesque incidents of the period of the monarchy which are not found in the Books of Kings. Most of these incidents are probably unhistorical, but their picturesqueness and interest are scarcely lessened on that account. Upon one of these incidents, then, I would hang the sermon of to-day. We are told that Pekah, King of Israel, made war upon Judah, and slew an enormous number of Judæans. (The chronicler, it may be observed, delights in huge figures.) The Israelites took, moreover, two hundred thousand prisoners, including women and children, and brought them to Samaria, where they intended to sell them as slaves. But "a prophet of the Lord was there whose name was Oded;" he went forth to the army and harangued it. He declared that God had suffered this great defeat to befall the Judæans because of their sins, but that the

enslavement of their brethren by the Israelites would also provoke the anger of the Lord. And even if Judah had sinned, was Israel guiltless? Surely not. "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?" (2 Chron. xxviii. 9, 10).

These words ring out as a protest against intolerance and persecution in every age. More especially does the force of them come home to us when we would adversely and harshly criticise our fellow-citizens or the members of our own faith, because their opinions and their practices do not entirely agree with our own. It is comparatively easy to be tolerant towards those who are far off and who seldom cross our path. We Jews, for instance, are wonderfully tolerant towards the heathen, towards Buddhists and Mohammedans. We are even tolerant towards the various sects of Christianity, and sometimes we affect to marvel at the lack of charity which Christians show to one another. How bitter is the feeling of Dissent against Anglicanism, of the Low Church against the High! And perhaps our criticisms are true. But are *we* justified in making them? Are there no glass windows in our own houses? "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?"

There are some forms of intolerance which

are specially noticeable ; I hope that the members of the Jewish Religious Union will specially seek to avoid them. There is the intolerance of ignorance, and, combined with it, there is the intolerance of inconsistency. There is the intolerance which looks for notoriety ; there is the intolerance which springs from the desire of comfort and repose. Its motto is "*Quieta non movere.*"

It is a curious and mournful fact how intolerance seems to dog the footsteps of religion. The lessons of the past are never learned. The very community which has most suffered from intolerance will perchance be least unwilling to display it when the occasion serves. History repeats itself. The old disputes may seem absurd to younger generations, but fresh differences are found to serve present needs. That the quarrels of fifty years ago seem foolish to the men of to-day, does not make the men of to-day remember that their quarrels will seem foolish, and worse than foolish, fifty years hence. Exclusions, votes of censure, organised and petty persecutions, have still not ceased to be the weapons of intolerance.

Another curious thing about intolerance is that it loves to cloak itself in the trappings of legality. In order that the opinions or the rites which it chooses to regard as the only true

opinions and the only legitimate rites may be also the only opinions and the only rites publicly professed and practised within its particular community, no means is more soothing and pleasant to intolerance than appeals to legality, to acts of parliament, constitutions, and articles of faith. The intolerance that rests on inconsistency and ignorance naturally makes a show both of knowledge and consistency. It aims at outward uniformity; to what goes on beneath the surface it is indifferent. It hardly realises that there are many pathways to holiness; it confuses the pathway and the goal.

Intolerance is not the prerogative of any one party. Liberals are intolerant as well as Conservatives, reformers as well as orthodox. Those who do any new thing in religion are apt to think that their opponents are narrow, ignorant, and insincere. Perhaps this very charge of intolerance will be brought up against me for what I have said and am going to say, and we must all admit that it is very hard for the parties and leaders in any dispute to preserve the judicial temper of mind and an absolute fairness of speech. We may respect the intolerance of ardent belief and of passionate jealousy. Though often ignorant, it is not inconsistent. But against those who draw a wide distinction be-

tween inward belief and outward conformity, between individual and community, and who combine inconsistency with ignorance, a little antagonism is not wholly ill-disposed.

But while it would be absurd to think that all our opponents are equally sincere, wise, temperate, and noble, it is far more important for us to purify ourselves than to criticise our antagonists. The great use to which we should put our observation of faults in others is the detection and the cure of similar faults in ourselves.

Take the principle of inward and outward harmony. There are men who, in their private lives, violate many laws of Jewish orthodoxy, yet object, for example, to the services of our Union, because they seem untraditional or unorthodox. There is to be any amount of heterodoxy in the lives of individuals; there is to be one rigid uniformity in outward worship. Worship is for the sake of life; yet it is to have no relation to life. Such an attitude of mind and such criticism as this move our laughter; but are we ourselves wholly free from the same painful inconsistency? Are we attempting to make our own lives of a single piece—holy on work days as well as on Saturdays; do we pray in our homes as well as within this hall?

Again take the frequent criticism that what we

do and say here is un-Jewish. It is, indeed, an odd thing when men and women, who freely do things which their very grandfathers would have declared to be un-Jewish, consider that Judaism from Moses to Mendelssohn has always been the double of their own. It is an odd thing when persons who have never opened a Jewish book beyond the Bible and their own particular Prayer Book, affect in blissful ignorance to declare what is traditional Judaism and what is reprehensible innovation. But let us not imitate such persons. Let us rather beware of their example, and attempt to profit by it. If we have no time to learn, let us at least acknowledge our ignorance, and upon the basis of this acknowledged ignorance there may come the desire of knowledge. For he who is ignorant of his ignorance can never want to lose it : it dominates and controls him for ever.

But now, my friends, passing from such warnings, let me speak a few words of encouragement and consolation, of exhortation and of hope.

The services of our Union have continued for nearly three months. Week by week men and women have gathered here for prayer, common worship, perhaps also for instruction. Doubtless some have partly come from curiosity ; there has been some talk about these services in the Jewish

press and elsewhere, and some people may have wished to see what they were like. But these were exceptions. While we are deeply grateful to the ladies and gentlemen who form our choir, and who have given time and thought to study and rehearsals, and while we thankfully acknowledge that their labour and co-operation have greatly added to the value and excellence of our services, it is nevertheless true to say that, in the very nature of things, no one would often come to this hall who was not interested in our movement, or who did not come to take a real part in our worship and prayer. I do not assert that you will always continue to come here, but for the present the fact remains that you come because, on the one hand, you have felt a certain need and, on the other hand, you have felt that, in spite of many imperfections and rough edges, that need was, at least to some extent, here supplied. You felt that your more or less articulate cries had been heard; heed had been given to them; an honest, if provisional and imperfect, attempt had been made to answer and to still them. You have come here as Jews, and it is a Jewish service to which you come. If you did not feel yourselves to be Jews, if you did not want a Jewish service and Jewish teaching, most assuredly you would not be here. If you wanted

Christian services and Christian hymns, if you wanted Unitarian or Theistic services, they were all available to you. A regularly established house of worship is more attractive than a hall commonly used for other and secular purposes.

To you then I would say : Be not perturbed by criticisms, or turned aside thereby from the big things to the small. Or rather I would not say this as one apart from you, but as one of you. Let us not be perturbed by criticisms, or turned aside thereby from the big things to the small. It is the big religious needs which we sought to meet and satisfy ; it is the big things of religion and of Judaism which we must think of and care for. It is the big things which truly matter : the life with God ; prayer and communion ; Judaism as a living faith ; the love of God quickening our daily lives to greater probity, purity, and sacrifice—these are the things that matter, these are “the things that are more excellent.”

“ Shall we perturb and vex our soul
For ‘wrongs’ which no true freedom mar,
Which no man’s upright walk control,
And from no guiltless deed debar ?
What odds though tonguesters heal, or leave
Unhealed, the grievance they invent ?
To things, not phantoms, let us cleave—
The things that are more excellent.”

Doubtless there are passages in our provisional liturgy which are open to criticism, which can be attacked as well as defended. Yet it must not be forgotten that some of the Committee of our Union have been keenly watchful to see that, in our choice of prayers and in our readings of prayers, we should always follow good historical precedent. Personally I would say, even if this were *not* so, let us not waver or be discouraged because some, like those whom the prophet reproved of old, would make us offenders "for a word," and "turn us aside" for a "thing of nought"; never mind if here we have a line too much and there we have a line too little. For to them for whom it was "ever precept upon precept, rule upon rule; here a little and there a little," to them we are told that the prophet had said, "This is the true rest, give rest to the weary; this is the true refreshment; yet they would not hear." Let us, then, not be greatly disturbed, even though we are blamed because, in the unfortunate, temporary lack of Jewish hymns, whether original or translated, we have used some which, though based almost word for word on Jewish sources, were yet written by Christian hands. Was it not a Jewish prophet who declared: "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down thereof my name is great among

the nations, saith the Lord," and are we not all, on occasion, proud to use and to expand his words: "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" And for myself, I would add: We need not think that God will chide if, in our wish not to break the bruised reed or to quench the dimly burning wick, in our anxiety to reclaim and bring back, in our desire to realise the Sabbath as a day of calm and restful hope, we here think and speak of God more often as the Redeemer and the Saviour, as the Source of Reconcilement and Forgiveness and Atonement, than as the Judge and as Him that punishes and condemns. We too believe fully in the dread doctrine that sin brings punishment, we believe in the necessary sternness of love. But believing too that God's punishments are remedial and disciplinal, not eternal or vindictive, we should grieve that a single soul should misunderstand or ignore the more excellent Jewish truths of the divine nature and rule, or find a stumbling-block which kept him from the goal of Judaism and of God.

Let us, not greatly moved by censures and criticisms, seek to make our own religion more vital and consistent. It is not to be a religion for Saturdays only, but for week-days as well. It is the same mind which is to be active in

religion as in all the other aspects and divisions of our lives. Let our religion be real, strong, effective. Can it not be Jewish as well? In fundamentals, surely, "Yes." Let us not be greatly moved if, for the sake of securing reality, strength, and effectiveness, we have to make a few changes or modifications. Can exactly the same nutriment, dressed up in precisely the same form, be suited for every age? To us, too, the voice may come: "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward." Life, progress, and movement: these ideas are connected. The immutable is God alone.

Meanwhile let us not only be brave and calm, but also hopeful. The earth moved and moves in spite of those who would have crushed Galileo. Too late do the descendants of intolerant men regret the doings of their ancestors. What Jewish community now would not regret the excommunication of Spinoza? How many English Churchmen do not regret the policy which made Methodism a force without the Church and not within it?

I was lately reading two sermons by that distinguished scholar and theologian, Professor Sanday, upon the divisions in the Church. To almost every Jew who read those sermons they

would seem sensible and just: for the Jew stands outside both parties to the dispute, and can place himself above them. But how if he were to apply Professor Sanday's words to what is going on in our own midst? Would he agree with them then? Let us see: "So long as one side confines itself to protestings and denouncings, the breach will only be widened, and the antagonisms will be hardened and confirmed." And again: "I do not blame the motives of those who are acting in the way that I have just described. I believe that they desire to uphold what they think is true and sound in religion. But when they take these confused opinions of theirs as a standard by which others are to be judged, unconscious all the time of their own confusion of thought and want of knowledge, it is very easy to see what mischief is sure to be done." And lastly, the synagogue—I admit that Professor Sanday's *text* reads "the Church"—the synagogue "is a far richer and nobler thing made as it is, than it would be if all were cast in the same mould, if all had exactly the same opinions and the same practices. We should remember that we are men, very fallible and short-sighted men, and that we are not in a position to set up a standard to which we can expect all others to

conform. We should give others credit for knowing what is best for themselves, and leave them to go their way unmolested. The limits of the human mind are such that one man cannot adequately enter into the thoughts and wants and aspirations of another."

Are they not wise words? Let us, members of the Jewish Religious Union, seek to be true to them, and to their positive and tolerant teaching, both in the spirit and the letter. For of all of us, alas, can it not in some degree be said: "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?"

January 10, 1903.

IX

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

I THINK there may be some present to-day, who have read two brilliantly phrased articles on Faith and Science, by Principal Lodge, in the first numbers of the *Hibbert Review*. I do not propose to discuss either the statements or the conclusion of those articles in detail. They have for us the merit of putting into eloquent language, and of bringing home clearly to us a view of Science and Religion that in the past has claimed martyrs condemned to death, or more often to miserable life. "Orthodox modern science," we are told, "shows us a self-contained and self-sufficient universe, not in touch with anything beyond or above itself. . . . The universe contemplated by religion is by no means self-contained or self-sufficient." The whole controversy hinges, says the writer, in one sense on a practical pivot—the efficacy of prayer—and in another sense upon a question of fact. It is of the question of fact only that I

can speak to-day. "Do we," asks Sir Oliver Lodge, "live in a universe permeated with life and mind: life and mind independent of matter and unlimited in individual duration? Or is life limited, in space to the surface of masses of matter, and in time to the duration of the material envelope essential to its manifestation? The answer is given in one way by orthodox modern science, and in another way by Religion of all times; and until these opposite answers are made consistent, the reconciliation between Science and Faith is incomplete."

In that ultimate reconciliation Sir Oliver Lodge believes, though hardly in a way that I can myself accept.

The problem is one that has undergone singular transformations in the course of the last half century. The attacks of geologists and naturalists on the orthodox cosmogony, formerly accepted by Jews and Christians alike, seem to us to be out of date. We are no longer even interested in the question that we once thought essential to true religion. The older view is still maintained by hierarchies, in dealing with the purely ignorant. I read the other day in a great Cathedral—a monument both of Faith and of the Church—a sentence that ran somewhat as follows: "The Church tells man

all that he needs to know of man, of the world, of God."

But from the frontier there laid down, of which we know the historic origin and the fundamental weakness, we have seen the Churches in continual retreat. We have seen Science pushing gradually forward until a few of her most reckless advocates claim to have driven out Religion from her last strongholds, and to be able to satisfy every demand of the individual conscience and of the soul of peoples, to explain the world, material and moral, by the concepts of mathematics, physics, and chemistry. These concepts, or rather their material origins, they assert, are the realities and certainties of this life. The atomic theory explains not only the synthesis of indigo, but the passions of a Dreyfus affair.

But recklessness and absurdity of this kind bring a prompt retribution. There has indeed been talk, no less absurd, of the failure of science.

I think we shall be nearer the truth if we regard the conflict as a conflict concerning not the whole region of science, nor the whole region of religion, but a conflict on the inevitable border-line, a border between the sea of science and the land of religion, from which only the crumbling shores and a few weakly

constructed embankments and jetties of religion have been swept away. The sea remains sea, and the land solid land. The weaknesses and the alleged weaknesses of orthodox religion have occupied our attention much. Let us turn for a moment to that strange conclusion of "orthodox modern science" by which the world appears to us as "self-contained and self-sufficient," an ideal machine, regulating and feeding itself—perfect and unliving.

Is it possible by means of steps, each one certain, and imposing itself on the mind with that character of self-evidence demanded by Descartes, the creator both of modern science and of the mechanical conception of the universe, I say is it possible to pass logically from the scientific observations of external things to a conclusion of this kind?

The conclusion is no doubt accepted by many men of science, some of them, as we know, of the greatest distinction, but especially by those ignorant of the foundations of the physical sciences. It is one which Huxley, one of the sanest minds of the last century, would never have accepted. It is one which the newest school of scientific men, the school whom I suppose I must call heterodox, since the word orthodox is claimed for the rest, would most

certainly reject.¹ The orthodox man of science, the supposed enemy of belief, is nothing if not a believer. Faith may be shown by a perfect belief in atoms or in ether, as well as by a perfect belief in the miraculous efficacy of the water of Lourdes. Nothing could be more fascinating than a history of scientific beliefs. Scientific men—and no one can deny that Ptolemy was a great scientific man—believed that the heavenly bodies rolled in great curves, of which the earth was the centre. The observed movements of the heavens confirmed that belief. Then came Copernicus and Galileo, who showed that it was simpler to suppose that the sun was the centre of the heavens, and that the earth and planets moved round the sun. After terrible struggles, men of science came to believe in the theory of Copernicus and Galileo. That theory is accepted by the majority as an article of faith at the present day.

We shall get deep into our problem by asking if the theory of Copernicus is *truer* or only *simpler* than that of Ptolemy? What is the answer given by that heterodox school of which I speak, a school identified with the names of Kirchhoff, the discoverer of spectrum analysis, in Ger-

¹ A new and forcible criticism of the mechanical theory of the universe has been put forward by Mr. A. E. Taylor in his "Elements of Metaphysics," published since this address was written.

many, of Mach in Austria, of Karl Pearson in England, of Poincaré, unexcelled among modern mathematicians, in France? It is this, that science does not explain, but describes, nature.¹ Its object is to describe nature as accurately and simply as possible, in the most convenient terms, in the most convenient form we can find. The helio-centric theory of Copernicus is not truer than the geo-centric theory of Ptolemy, it is simpler and therefore more easily handled.

The difference between the two views, the orthodox view of the one school and the heterodox view of the other, may seem small; it is in reality immense: it transforms our whole conception of the functions of science, and of the validity of its conclusions with regard to the data of religion.

The old notions of mathematical laws governing the universe as a Creator might govern it with a rod of iron, have long since disappeared from all but the ordinary mediocre text-books. The law of universal gravitation itself now appears but as a marvellously brief and simple description of complicated phenomena, destined no doubt to be replaced by some formula still simpler, and representing to us more closely still,

¹ See especially E. Mach's "Science of Mechanics," Karl Pearson's "Grammar of Science," and H. Poincaré's *La Science et l'Hypothèse*.

the facts which crowd upon us. The forces of nature, formerly raised to the rank of demi-gods, are but the projections of our own imagination into a world which they help us to conceive. In experimental science there is nothing final. Even those truths of mathematics, which we have regarded as ultimate and certain, are regarded by many mathematicians now as depending entirely on postulates, on conventions which are not necessary but only convenient. There is not one geometry, there are many geometries, of which we choose out for use those which we find most suitable for the purpose in hand. Science remains to us as a convenient method for handling external things: it teaches us to build a house or a pyramid, to move trains, to transmit messages through space. It gives us a temporary mastery over material things. But in science we are, after all, but gropers after truth, happy indeed when, in the darkness, or, if you please, in the dazzling glitter of innumerable facts, we can recognise and manipulate some form already familiar to the imagination. Our knowledge of science is important to us in our daily life. The investigations of science have the magnificence of the greatest poetry; within limits they command universal assent. But now, let each one of us

ask himself what are the things that ultimately matter to us most? If, of human achievement, something had to be sacrificed; which should we sacrifice first—the achievements of science, or the achievements of religion? Are men not willing for the sake of the idea of their country, of justice, of truth, to abandon the comfort that science has brought to us, to live the life of savage men, or more, to risk personal obloquy, contempt, misery, to sacrifice the happiness of those near to them? It is true that in religion we cannot as in science, at any-rate at present, command the universal assent that we desire for the ideas we care for most. That assent may come some day. We believe as Jews that it will. "On that day the Lord shall be acknowledged one, and His name shall be one."

But we are actors, not spectators in the world, and meantime there lies a plain duty before us; and I speak chiefly to those who live on the borderland of Judaism. Do not think that your opinion, your belief, your practice, does not matter, that you can hold your belief as well by yourself as you can hold it with others. Beliefs are not summed up by the rule of addition. The belief of two men and of ten men, thinking alike and gathered

together, is something stronger, more powerful for good, than the beliefs of these men separately. We can strengthen each other in our daily belief and daily work, as our martyrs comforted each other in martyrdom. The soul of a people is something more than the souls of individuals. In that truth lies the justification, so it seems to me, of organised religion, of its precepts and its commands, of the unity of form, by which alone men can be brought into completer community of feeling and of action.

Each one of us is responsible, no doubt, individually to God for his actions. It is true, as indeed both Science and the Decalogue tell us, that the "iniquities of the fathers are visited upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation." But it is true, as Ezekiel tells us, that the "righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." It is to be remembered that Ezekiel was not only a prophet, he was also a priest. Judaism combines in a fashion, towards which the world is gradually turning, the religion of the individual with the religion of the community. Judaism, with its traditions of communion both with God and with man is for us a strength; we have to make it, each one working humbly towards the common end,

a strength for mankind. There is no room for false modesty in this matter. Let the man who does not think his own creed best, choose a better.

Noblesse oblige. For those who have inherited the traditions of an Ezekiel and an Isaiah, the tradition of unnumbered and nameless martyrs, the duty and the privilege are not small. Let none of you think that science stands in the way of exercising that duty and that privilege.

January 17, 1903.

X

ISRAEL'S ONE NEED

“Quicken Thou us, and we will call upon Thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts ; cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.”—Ps. lxxx. 18–19.

THERE is one characteristic feature common to many of the Psalms. They are the outpourings of the sorrow-stricken heart, which yet has its grief transfigured by glad trust in God. In his darkest hour, the Psalmist, now speaking for Israel, now telling the story of the individual soul, finds escape from his anguish in the refuge of the Everlasting Arms. From his very affliction he plucks solace, strength, joy ; this visible world, so sad, so full of turmoil, is merged and lost in the unseen but real world where God dwells with His unspeakable peace. The 80th Psalm is a signal example of this familiar characteristic. And—to interpose an incidental word—it is wonderful to think how these poets of old were content to leave their hymns as a religious bequest to future generations, and

yet to remain themselves unknown. For them the power to console and uplift other hearts was enough. For mere fame they cared nothing. And in this particular instance their gift is more than usually precious. The consciousness of God, the conviction that life with Him is the highest good, the only real good—this permeates the Psalm from beginning to end. God's people are in sore distress. The vine brought out of Egypt, which once throve so mightily, is the prey of wild beasts ; it is burned with fire ; it is cut down. Israel is suffering from earthly troubles ; but the Psalmist knows that the only antidote for them is spiritual, seeing that their roots are spiritual. The heart of the people must be changed—led back to God, if the source of their woe is to be reached, and they are to know happiness again. For this, then, it is that the inspired singer beseeches the Divine help : “Quicken Thou us, and we will call upon Thy name ;” and then, repeating the lovely refrain which has met us twice before, “Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts ; cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.” In this dark hour of a people's agony, the only possible light is that which streams from the face of God.

I have read the 80th Psalm to you this after-

noon, partly because it is so beautiful—for me it has an indescribable fascination—but partly too because it has a living significance for us of this age. The troubles of Israel are by no means past. God's historic vine is still trampled under foot by ruthless foes; it is burned and cut down by persecuting hands. Still may the old lament go up: "Thou hast fed Thy people with the bread of tears; Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours, and our enemies laugh among themselves." But it is not of actual calamities that I would speak. There are other problems besides the dire extremity of the oppressed Jew of Eastern Europe which demand consideration at our hands. If Israel is threatened in Russia and Roumania, it is Judaism that is in peril in lands of freedom. That we recognise the fact this congregation itself is a proof. What are these services but a courageous—I had almost said a desperate—attempt to meet an imperious need, a confession that all is not well with us religiously, that some of us are in danger of drifting away from the old moorings—away into the wide and unknown sea, without chart or compass?

And if the old maladies recur to-day, though here and there in new shapes, it is only the old remedies that will avail to cure them. The

consciousness of God—this was the Psalmist's panacea. It must be ours. What we want in this age is the religious spirit. Our need is not merely to talk about God, but to know Him and to feel Him, to have Him in our life, to see in Him what the Psalmist would call our "salvation," our one help, our one hope, our one joy. We want to get rid of this heavy weight of worldliness which is dragging us down, to tear asunder this veil of self-love which is hiding realities from us. We want new ideals, a new philosophy of life, new life. "Quicken Thou us," cries the Psalmist; and we need the temper that will enable us to throw all our soul into the prayer.

"'Tis life of which our veins are scant ;
O life, not death, for which we pant
More life and fuller, *that* we want."

This is the one cure for our present ailments. Let us regain our grasp on the highest, and put low things back into their rightful place ; let us begin to pray once more, to pray in the submissive spirit of the saintly men of olden times, biblical and post-biblical, and we shall be safe. Our religious life will be safe ; the religion of our fathers will be safe. For, with our faith in the eternal verities restored, sure of the Supreme,

sure of His might and mercy, we shall rejoice once more in a religion which expresses those verities in the purest form. For many are drifting away from Judaism simply because they have lost their hold on God!

But, so closely interwoven is the material with the spiritual, that with our religious difficulties our worldly anxieties will be banished too. I will not stop now to trace this interdependence in the individual experience, to show that the one specific for sorrow and pain is the trusting temper that finds its stay in God. What I am concerned to point out is how collective troubles are exorcised by the magic of the religious life. Even this favoured atmosphere of England feels the disturbance set up by the storms of anti-Semitism which rage in distant lands. Where shall we look for safety if not to our religion—yes, to our religion, though it seems to be the very cause of the hostility which the Jew has to endure? In former times the Torah, in its widest sense, with all the delight it offered to those who studied and obeyed it, was the Israelite's refuge from the storms of the world. Shall it not be ours? When the favourite accusation hurled at us is that we are self-seeking materialists, that we are deaf to the call of the higher life,

and that it is not for the profit of society to suffer us, what effective refutation can we offer save that which is furnished by a morality consciously and obviously nourished by the God-idea? Prayer we need, with which to hearten ourselves for our private battle and for our people's warfare. But character we need too, with which to put the coping-stone on prayer, and vindicate ourselves and our people to the world. Yes, my brethren, you will be the first to admit that these services are not an end in themselves. They have only begun their task when they have created a feeling of spiritual exaltation, however keen, however lasting. Like the life-giving waters issuing out of the Sanctuary, which Ezekiel saw in his vision, the devotional tide must feed the tree of the noble life, so that its "leaf shall not wither, neither shall the fruit thereof fail." Prayer must make us better men and women, and therefore better Jews and Jewesses—men and women who, uplifted by their worship, have sworn an oath to abandon every mean and sordid and unholy thing, for their own true welfare and for the abiding weal of Israel.

Nor is a deeper spiritual life our only need. We must live the Jewish life, too. If we have to get a clearer consciousness of God, we have

also to strengthen our Jewish consciousness. Our Psalmist has both endowments. For him God is the Lord of Hosts, but also the Shepherd of Israel. The glory of the Supreme is made manifest in His loving care for His lowly flock. Nay, Israel is God's vine, taken from Egypt in olden days and planted in holy soil. The inspired poet is an Israelite to the core. These sacred singers, whose hymns have become the chosen medium through which the souls of millions of men now utter themselves, could keep their hearts fixed on their people's story, and draw from it some of their noblest inspiration! Is there not a lesson for us in the fact? There are Jews who would rest in a vague theism, deprived of organic contact with the past. It is an idle dream. As well hope that an uprooted tree might flourish. For there can be no Judaism without Jews, and there can be no Jews without the bond of a common love for the past of our race, of a common belief in its future. In Judaism religion and history are inseparably interwoven; the one draws its nutriment from the other. The life-story of Israel is one long call for allegiance to the faith; it is a code of religion in itself. The Law-giver, at once colossal and meek, his soul suffused with love for all his people, living and

to be born, is himself an additional sanction to his law ; for us, their spiritual descendants, the Prophets have an especial message ; because the Psalmists are ours we catch all the more surely their quenchless faith ; the cry of the martyrs awakes in our breasts an answering resolve to live for the creed for which they died. Without this historic sympathy Judaism is unmeaning, impossible. With it, it is deathless. It is its life-blood !

But besides the past there is the future, which, in the words of George Eliot's Mordecai, "stretches towards us the appealing arms of children." Is it not a splendid task for which it claims us ? Has not Israel been plucked like a brand from the burning, so that he might pave the way for the "one far-off divine event" ? And shall it not be our pride and our privilege to share in the work ? It is for that work that we live. It is the one justification for our existence, for our loyalty to an old-world ritual, for our separatism, for our particularism. If the Jewish consciousness is a vain thing, the Jewish mission a chimera, then it is time to end the pathetic drama of the centuries, and ring down the curtain. But it is no chimera. Again and again has the ancient prayer been answered : "Quicken Thou us, and

we will call upon Thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts ; cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." Rescued a thousand times from mortal peril, we have lived on, and with every such deliverance another stone has been added to the slowly growing fabric of the world's redemption.

Therefore let us cherish this historic conscience, opening our hearts wide to its message, rejecting all enticements that would lure us away from the stronghold where Judaism sits secure. Let us be Jews, I say—Jews in our worship, the fount and custodian of the Jewish idea, Jews in our lives. How much ceremonial observance is needed for it, is a matter which the individual conscience must determine for itself. But that our sympathies, our sentiments, our ideals must be Jewish, there can be no question. For us, though all the earth is God's and all mankind His children, Israel must be the chosen race. The responsibility of election will sober and chasten and ennoble us ; it will make us strain every nerve to prove that we are the elect by integrity, by purity, by loving deeds done to all men. But it shall surely fill us with a seemly pride. The Psalmist's vine, trodden down and ruined as it is, was once a glorious tree. "It took deep root and

filled the land ; the mountains were covered with the shadow of it ; and the boughs thereof were like cedars of God." Even in its low estate it retains its noble potentialities ; it will revive if only its Divine Planter will look down from heaven and behold and visit it. Ah, do we not all need to have this proud feeling, which sees in Israel, in Judaism, the scion of God's planting, its roots extending back through the centuries, its branches sheltering a world ? For we Jews are too apt to hide our faith and our race out of sight, as though they were something inferior. We who have given religion to mankind are half afraid to declare *our* religion. We, whose annals are the noblest in the story of the nations, are tempted to apologise for our descent. We who are of the world's aristocracy are inclined to agree with those who brand us as parvenus. What we want is more self-confidence—of the right sort ; of the lower kind we have enough and to spare. It is time that we redressed the balance, and discarding the pride of wealth and of intellect, despising the self-assertion of the vulgar worldling, look to the sources of the higher, the legitimate pride which we possess in abundance—our glorious history, our sublime religion, our consecration to the holiest of all errands.

Such, then, are our most pressing needs, as I conceive them. They are all summed up in one word—religion. After that let us seek—seek after it by solemn self-communion, but also by the invocation of that Divine guidance and help which never failed our fathers in olden days: “Quicken Thou us, and we will call upon Thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts; cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.”

March, 21, 1903.

XI

THE OLDER PATH

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the Lord.”—AMOS viii. 11.

REMOVED from its context, this prophecy of Amos may well seem ambiguous. Is it a threat, or is it a promise, which the prophet means to convey? Is it a blessing or a curse that he foretells? The context, it is true, makes it quite clear that the words are meant to convey a threat—Amos is denouncing the bull-worshipping Israelites “that swear by the sin of Samaria.” In itself, however, such an hunger and thirst for the words of God may be a consummation devoutly to be wished. All depends on whether or not a real effort is made to satisfy this hunger and thirst. Sheer absence of the word of God, the cessation of all religious inspiration—that is, indeed, too sad to contemplate. In this sense the burden of our text is certainly fatal. And yet, sombre

as that message is, it is couched in language that brings healing on its wings, by suggesting a remedy for the very evil which it threatens. And this message, both in its sadness and in its hopefulness, is not without significance for present-day Anglo-Judaism.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the Lord.”

Even a slight acquaintance with the history of human progress, in any field of man's many-sided activities, inevitably forces on one the conclusion that every advance, every discovery or invention, has had to be paid for—always in the sweat of the brow, often in blood. In God's vineyard, it seems, no new truth can be planted, nor can an old error be weeded out, without some bruises more or less severe. Religion is no exception to this general rule. Far from it! It is from the history of religion that one may cull its most painful illustrations. Persecution from without, and persecution from within, the ranks of the several creeds have accomplished enough, and more than enough, to justify that classic description of the servant of God as one “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and

acquainted with grief." Sometimes, however, the penalty may take a less obvious and more complex form. The trouble may be due not to persecution at all, but to that inner chaos which is liable to ensue when old habits of thought are undermined, and the soul has not yet winged her way to a higher plane. The consequences may, for a time, be very serious. If the displaced conceptions were supposed, though wrongly supposed, to be the ultimate sanctions of morality, then grave demoralisation may ensue, and the progress of mankind may cost the temporary fall of man.

It is something of this nature that we seem to be witnessing now as the result of the newer Bible-criticism. Recent issues of the Jewish press contained, as you know, several noteworthy accounts of East End Jews and Judaism. These accounts will be found to illustrate well enough what I mean. Some of our best communal workers seem agreed that there are signs of a decline in the best elements of Jewish character—as may be seen by the gradual loosening of family ties, more numerous offences against the law of the land, growing gambling proclivities, and the like. This demoralisation, they suggest, is largely due to a decay in religious feeling caused by

the "coarse and undesirable forms in which biblical criticism and free thought percolate through every class of society." Let me quote some remarks of Mr. Lewis on this point. "The decay of orthodoxy in East London constitutes an undoubted danger to moral character. This is inevitable. There is no time in a man's life so critical as when he finds the sanctions of conduct by which he has been hitherto bound have become unloosed. . . . The thoughtful and conscientious will attempt the painful task of reconstructing a theory of life to replace that which has been found wanting; the unreflective may continue to be guided by custom . . . after the former motives have lost their force. It must often happen, however, that former convictions are replaced by indifference—indifference which not only extends to positive religion in the narrower sense, but also to the obligations of moral rectitude. Uneducated people are peculiarly exposed to this danger. They are without the wider culture which shows us that the facts of the spiritual world admit of more than one interpretation. It may well appear to them that the old forms of faith are the only ones possible, and when they cease to be credible, the whole conception of duty disappears with them." In

the lives of such men the curse of our text seems almost literally realised. After long implicit belief that their every act had directly or indirectly been prescribed by the very word of God, that word of God seems suddenly snatched from them, and, with it, their chief intellectual and moral guide.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the Lord.”

The problem which has but recently compelled the serious attention of our community is by no means a new one, though, owing possibly to the natural conservatism of Jewish character, it has been slower to manifest itself in our midst than elsewhere. Already thirty years ago, Matthew Arnold earnestly warned the general community of its existence. In his preface to “Literature and Dogma” (1873), he cites an extract from a working-man’s letter, which is well worth re-citing. “Despite the efforts of the Churches (so wrote this working-man) the speculations of the day are working their way down among the people, many of whom are asking for the reason and authority for the things they have been taught to believe. Questions of this kind, too, mostly reach them

through doubtful channels; and owing to this and their lack of culture, a discovery of imperfection and fallibility in the Bible leads to its contemptuous rejection as a great priestly imposture."

This kind of contempt, needless to say, is not the monopoly of the working classes. Nor is it any the less erroneous because it happens to be the recoil from another extreme. And it is fraught with serious moral danger. For the Bible, as Matthew Arnold insists, is *the* fountain of moral inspiration. "As well imagine (he says) a man with a sense for sculpture not cultivating it by the help of the remains of Greek Art, or a man with a sense for poetry not cultivating it by the help of Homer and Shakespeare, as a man with a sense for conduct not cultivating it by the help of the Bible. As long as the world lasts, all who want to make progress in righteousness will come to Israel for inspiration . . . and in hearing and reading the words Israel has uttered for us, carers for conduct will find a glow and a force they could find nowhere else."

If so, then one course at any rate seems to suggest itself as an obvious remedy against the religious and moral decadence which threatens some of our brethren. Something should be

done to bring them again into sympathetic touch with the Bible. The old, orthodox attitude towards that sacred volume, and all the practical consequences following from such an attitude, cannot be accused of having failed to produce many noble and beautiful characters. No one will dispute that. Nor could any one really think of interfering in any way with those whose attitude is still genuinely orthodox. But there are others—many others. One cannot, even if one would, make these orthodox by simply supposing or wishing them to be so. If to some the old mediæval path of orthodox Judaism seems too like an artificially intricate maze, then must they be carefully helped to retrace their steps to the simpler, older path ; the older path traced and trodden by the very prophets whose inspiring messages have given to our history all the significance it has—messages still brimful of religious inspiration and moral healing. The newer method of Bible study certainly does help one to a better appreciation of our religion by revealing to us the course of its evolution, and so enabling us to discriminate between its permanent and its temporary factors. The permanent features of Judaism will be recognised easily enough by those who study the

Bible with a devout and open mind. A little knowledge coming through doubtful channels may be dangerous. The remedy would be to give them more knowledge, and that in its proper salutary form. Properly utilised, the newer knowledge will help them to a better appreciation of religion in general, and Judaism in particular. They cannot fail to recognise and feel impelled to follow the glorious older path of our chief sacred writers. And that older path is simple enough, straight enough, and it leads far enough. It presents no unnecessary problems to be explained or explained away; it confronts us with no unnecessary obstacles to be surmounted or circumvented; and there is nothing arbitrary about it. For Judaism (call it Hebraism if you like) as taught in the prophetic, and even some other parts of the Bible, is certainly as to nine-tenths of it just a God-inspired morality. Morality is the very essence of Biblical religion; the function of religious ceremony being simply to help us to realise the better that morality *is* God-inspired. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Here we have an ideal as simple in meaning as it is immutable in character

and inexhaustible in application. Here, too, we have a sure criterion of what is godly. Armed with such a criterion, the word of God will by no means be wanting. It will be found in abundance, and found as heretofore in our old Book. The word of God is still to be found by those who really hunger for it; the fountains of heaven are still open to such as truly thirst for its living waters. How to arouse such hunger and thirst, that is the question.

Whether or not the revived interest in the spiritual aspect of the East End problem will lead to any practical results, still remains to be seen. Some kind of Jewish adaptation of the now familiar University Settlement seems to have everything in its favour. In this work of spiritual regeneration, nothing is so desirable as the co-operation of University men, and the better educated generally. Their positive contribution may be variously estimated; but their aloofness is bound to inflict incalculable harm.

However, with or without some special organisation, every one of us is able to take part in this work of regeneration, if only by pondering these religious problems ourselves, and discouraging all indifference to issues so

vital. Within ourselves, at all events, let us not stifle the desire for God, but nurture and try to satisfy our natural hunger and thirst for the word of God. Nothing is indifferent in this world ; nothing is without its influence on others, however unintentional or even unconscious such influence may be. Our own hunger and thirst for the word of God, these also may be spread unconsciously, and they shall not go unsatisfied. Thus may we all in our several ways help to realise the brighter side of our text, and help to convert its burden of woe into a message of hope and words of promise.

“ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the Lord.”

March 28, 1903.

XII

LIBERTY AND LAW

“I will walk at liberty, for I have sought Thy precepts.”—
PSALM cxix. 45.

THE 119th Psalm is one of the most noteworthy of the entire collection. To a casual reader it may seem somewhat dull and monotonous; it seems to say the same thing in endless different ways. Its acrostic form is in itself unattractive. We can hardly regard it as a genuine inspiration—the outpouring of the heart—when eight successive verses are made to begin with every letter of the Hebrew alphabet. But a closer study of the Psalm leads to different conclusions. As we suffer ourselves to come under its spirit, and surrender ourselves, as we ought to do in all works of art or of religion, to receive its message without preconceptions and prejudices, we discern its intensity and truth. The writer revels in the Divine Law. In it he finds complete religious satisfaction. It leads him into the very presence of God. The many commandments which to

others might mean cramping servitude are to him full of delight and enlargement. They do not hinder the flight of the soul to its Maker, but, on the contrary, they are the very air on which its wings are poised. Because he follows God's statutes, therefore he walks in a broad place at ease. The mechanical form of the Psalm is a figure of the writer's attitude towards the Law. The bondage of the letter is transfigured into the freedom of the spirit. Law has become synonymous with Liberty.

This is the true Jewish paradox of the Law. It was maintained and developed by the Rabbis, who said, "There is no freedom except through the Torah." In fulfilling the Law man realises liberty. Nor must it be supposed that the liberty spoken of is political liberty. No doubt there are passages where such a meaning is intended. But in others it is clear that the liberty alluded to is inward—the religious liberty of the individual.

The thought is not wholly peculiar to Judaism. It has been perceived in many departments of life, and by the best intelligence of many races and creeds, that there is a service which leads to liberty, just as there is a freedom which is equivalent to bondage. By obedience to law man realises his own highest nature; he fulfils

himself. By wayward license he sinks into slavery. On the moral side, we are at once reminded of Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty," with its distinct enunciation of the doctrine that "unchartered freedom" is less satisfying than the bondage which lives in the light of truth. What can we say about it or think about it on the side of religion? Is religious liberty a conception of which it is worth while to draw out the implications and meanings to-day?

We all profess to admire religious liberty in its more outward sense. That every creed should be free, that the adherents of every creed should be unfettered in their power to worship God in their own way—these demands are, in England at any rate, commonplaces and facts. It is not quite the same with regard to the divisions of each creed in their relations with one another. Here there is, as we have reason to know, still room for some amount of intolerance, of uncharitableness in thought and deed. But I pass from religious liberty in this outward sense of doing and saying what we please to the more complicated inward sense, that sense which made the Rabbi say, "There is no freedom except through the Law," and which made the Christian writer say, "In Thy service is perfect freedom." In both these statements

there is contained a similar paradox and a similar truth : inward religious liberty is only to be attained by a peculiar kind of service or bondage. The Rabbinic Jew accepted the Law as the perfect word of God, immutable and absolute. Even as God was flawless in goodness and excellence, so was His Law. God has given this Law that man may live by it, that is, live by it the best and noblest life. Only in the glad acceptance of that Law, in uncompromising obedience to its every detail, will man realise himself, and rise to the highest limits of his capacity. There is no servitude in obeying such a law, so regarded. On the contrary, such obedience is freedom. For freedom is not wayward chance : it is not the license of passion ; it is free acceptance and free pursuit of a chosen and divine ideal.

My friends, I do not think that though, like yourselves, I feel the necessity for variety and development in the outer form, and in some of the doctrines of Judaism, I can be rightly said not to appreciate the nobility and purity of the old Rabbinic and traditional ideal. The curious duty has been imposed upon me of repeatedly defending that ideal, sometimes even while attempting to put forward and explain my own somewhat deviating opinions. I hardly

think that those who know the old paths best will declare that I have not written with appreciation and sympathy of their tendency and meaning. But Judaism is a living and expanding faith ; it has many aspects ; its most fundamental truths can be grasped in more than one way. The ideal of to-day cannot always be the same as the ideal of yesterday ; or, rather, there are varying ideals, yet all subservient to the central truths of the One God, and of the duty of Israel to bear witness to Him by their lives and their faith.

Those who are unable to be thorough-going traditionalists, who cannot regard the Pentateuch as in every line and letter the verbally inspired oracle of God, are in a position more difficult and more responsible than their brethren. The goal is the same ; the pathway is different. We, too, acknowledge as the goal : "In that day the Lord shall be King over all the earth : in that day the Lord shall be One and His name One." The goal, the hope, are the same ; the pathways differ. More especially is the lot of those responsible and difficult who are troubled and haunted by the wish for consistency, and who are not wholly able to find satisfaction in the many honourable but yet illusive compromises of belief and action, which seem to many of

those who sincerely hold them not only to be adequate and final, but not to differ in any material respect from the belief and practice of the true traditionalist. We, too, hold the same goal in view ; it is only the means and the pathway which vary. We, too, desire and accept the same ideal. We want both freedom and service, both liberty and law. But whereas to those who believe in the verbal inspiration of the Pentateuch, and in the divine authority of the Rabbinical injunctions, the Law is given for all time, and has only to be accepted in reverence and joy, we have in a sense to fashion our own Law, and to find the divine sanction first and foremost in the dictates of our own highest reason and purest feelings. Closely, indeed, must we question that reason and those feelings ; keenly must we be convinced, in all honesty and sincerity, that we do not mistake the promptings of the lower self—convenience, indifference, or weakness—for the voice of conscience and of God.

Now the personal ideal of every one of us must be that our action should proceed freely from the constraintment of duty. "Under the subjection of reason alone, men are properly said to live in freedom." So said the ancient philosopher, and we willingly re-echo his words.

The most absolute bondage and the most perfect liberty converge and meet at one point: they meet and unite in God. We poor mortals can only humbly strive at vast distance after *His* perfection in this respect as in all other respects. Desire and *force majeure*; outward stress, inward conflict; the necessities of compromise and adjustment, the varying requirements of individual and communal life; all co-operate to make our approach to the ideal more difficult and more distant. But yet the ideal, as an ideal, remains: free subjection to what we recognise, in brain and heart, to be the highest and the best.

What applies to us individually applies also, with needful changes, to our communal and institutional life. Many of you are aware how the Jewish conception of law has been often misconceived by outside critics of Judaism. They have thought that the law must be a burden. They are mistaken, because they do not realise that, where even an outside law is gladly and unquestionably accepted as the perfect word of God, and where the prescriptions of tradition are also accepted as sacred and divine, there can be no question of bondage. Such a law and such tradition make for freedom; to follow them is liberty.

But when the basis of belief is weakened, the laws, if they do not wholly harmonise with reason and with feeling, may truly become a burden; and if they are felt to be a burden, then they militate against the religious ideal which is common to us all. Our service of God is *then* no longer free service; heart and head and will do not all agree that it is the highest and the best; therefore it can no longer be *free* service, and no longer acceptable, as we may humbly believe, to the Author of Truth and the Giver of Freedom. For God asks of us *free* service; with what we feel and know to be the purest and the best, with *that*, in free allegiance, let us worship Him.

I take it that when the Jewish Religious Union will be judged in the light of history, impartially and fully, by those who come after us, through this justification alone can it win approval. If it be primarily a movement to make Sabbath-breaking easy, it will be unhesitatingly condemned. But if it merely recognise the hard pressure of facts, if with deeper meaning and intentions it also attempts to meet the needs of those who are compelled, living as they do in a non-Jewish environment, to work on Sabbath mornings, then it will, I believe, be acquitted at the bar of history.

But primarily it must stand for something deeper and different. It must stand for the desire to make a harmony between the inward and the outward, between private belief and public worship. It must stand for an attempt to make the same ideal operative in our public worship of God as in our private service of Him. Our individual life is to be a service of God. We should do nothing which is not to His glory. That is the ideal. The gathered sum of our thoughts and actions should contain nothing which is inconsistent with our faith in God. That is the ideal. And even as all our individual lives, looked at in this light, are to be spent in serving Him, so must it be a free service, rendered because we believe that such a life is the *best*, the best for ourselves as well as the best for mankind. The better we are, the freer we are, but also the more bound we are, bound in liberty of subjection, "bound by gold chains about the feet of God." And this free service we want to render to God in our public worship as well. We must feel *constrained* to offer it; we must feel *happy* in offering it; we must offer it in the glad compulsion of liberty.

Human life is incomplete without public worship. It is bad for most of us to do without it. We are all agreed about that. We are

also all agreed that it is peculiarly bad for us Jews to be without a *Jewish* public worship, without public reminder and acknowledgment of our Judaism, of our duties as Jews to God and to man. We are all agreed that without this public worship, strengthening and supplementing the private worship in our own homes and in the inner sanctities of solitude, many Jews and Jewesses may lose the sense of Judaism and their cohesion with the community. We differ as to the means. We of this Union say that in order that our public worship may be freely and gladly offered, that it may be felt as a duty, and yet as a duty which corresponds with and is stimulated by our convictions and our feelings, it must take varying *forms* to suit varying minds and various conceptions of Judaism. We must have a worship which fairly answers to the beliefs and aspirations of the worshippers, and *then* we must appeal to them to be constrained by this worship, to regard attendance at it as a duty, freely rendered, gladly paid. Such an aim is justifiable, and whether *then* we fail or succeed we may leave to God who rules the world and ourselves. "I will walk at liberty because I have sought Thee." That must still be our motto. Liberty to seek God as best we think that we can find

Him. Bondage in that liberty ; liberty through that bondage.

Those who are listening to me to-day know that a most serious decision in the life of this Union was come to last Sunday. It was then determined by a large majority that, apart from all other branches of the Union's work, and apart from all other services which we may organise elsewhere, it was wiser and better, if more difficult and more arduous, to keep these West End services also independent and untrammelled. That was done because we want these services *really* to appeal to those for whom they are intended, and *because* they so appeal, we want and we claim that their constraining power should also be recognised and felt.

And therefore since that decision has been come to, I would venture to make a double exhortation to yourselves, to those of you especially who shared with me in the responsibility of that decision, and who feel convinced that it was right and wise. On the one hand, and I say it to myself as well as to you, let us be of good hope, and let us not be afraid. In the tremendous changes which the last fifty years have wrought, changes social, political, historical, religious, and philosophical, is it

wonderful that we Jews can no longer all think alike, that we can no longer all feel the same satisfaction in the same kind of worship, that the same conceptions do not exercise an equally glad constraint upon us all? We should not be surprised at this; rather should we rejoice that the same goal can still unite us all, and that we are all linked together, in spite of differences, by devotion to a common faith. If we feel ourselves to be Jews, if we are sincerely convinced that our religion is rightly called Judaism, if our aims and intentions are pure, let us not be discouraged or cast down by criticism and rebuke. Let us lose neither our tempers nor our hearts, but by our lives and by our faith let us prove that Jews we are and Jews we will remain. Let no harsh word escape our mouths. But let us pray the more devoutly to God, whose witnesses we in our way, no less than our brethren in their way, claim and intend to be. Hard words may, perhaps, be used against us; ill-omened words: "Un-Jewish service, schism, divisions." How much less generous are those who use such words than those Christians who recognise and admit that, in spite of the far graver differences which separate Independent from Anglican, or Quaker from Roman Catholic, all alike may rightly call themselves Christian.

But, oh ! my friends, be not moved by words. Do not for one moment think yourselves less Jews and be less keen in your Judaism because others call your worship un-Jewish. In time to come the hand of fellowship, which now is closed or only half-opened, will be readily stretched out towards you. It takes two to quarrel. Go your way ; act up to your ideal ; and no evil can come to anybody, no evil can come to Judaism, because some Jews worship in one way and some in another, because some like to worship in Hebrew and some in English, because some like to keep the men and women apart, and some to mingle them together. If your independent worship is called schism, never mind the word ; it is a harsh word, but it is after all only a *word*. If you do not *feel* yourselves to be schismatics, if you do not allow yourselves to be moved one inch from your conviction and your consciousness of Judaism, the words will not do you or anybody else any harm. If they are used because our brethren are very deep and keen and eager in their love of God and love of Judaism, we can easily excuse them ; if they are used by those who are not, we can ignore them.

This, then, is one part of my exhortation. Be of good courage, and trust in God. But the

second part of my exhortation is to urge you to act in rational accordance with that decision of last Sunday. You wanted liberty. You have liberty. But remember that this liberty needs sacrifice; it needs devotion. This liberty you have claimed entails responsibility. There will be many things for you to do, many things in which those upon whom the direction of this Union devolves will require your help, your co-operation, your self-sacrifice. Upon these I will not dwell to-day. But to return to our underlying thought, remember that liberty on the one hand is of no use without bondage on the other. If you obtain a Jewish worship which answers to your needs, which corresponds with your conceptions of Judaism and of religion, then let it exercise upon you its holy and constraining force. Let it be to you both bondage and satisfaction. Take from it strength; give to it strength. Each of you can help to make it more helpful to others and to yourselves. Let it be your free choice, your joyful duty, to come here or wherever our worship may be held, week by week, and to offer your praise and prayer, in liberty of service, to Almighty God.

April 11, 1903.

XIII

OLD AND NEW

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”—JER. vi. 16.

“Sing unto the Lord a new song.”—ISA. xlii. 10.

I DO not propose to consider the meaning of these two passages in the original Hebrew and in the context where we find them. It might turn out that neither of them quite means what at first sight we should suppose it to mean. I use them only as convenient headings to indicate the subject which I wish to speak about to-day. That subject may be described as the relation and the claims of the Old and the New, the present and the past, in matters of religion, and more especially in Judaism. The subject is gigantic, and raises the most subtle and complicated problems. I naturally can and shall only touch quite lightly upon a few points connected with it which seem of special interest.

The right combination of Old and New, the

right satisfaction of the claims of each, are puzzles which do not only affect the *religious* aspects of our lives. They occur in varying forms elsewhere. Even in our homes and houses we have to deal with them. They are not so much a matter of right and wrong as a matter of taste and tact. Some people like to make a new home the replica of the old one. Others desire to move with the times. Again, there are occasions when the fine feeling, the ethical principle which the Germans call *Pietät*, respect for our parents, whether living or dead, may come in conflict with our own ideas of fitness or duty, and make us do, or not do, what otherwise we should refrain from or attempt. There are no rules for such conflicts: they must be decided by each one of us as, on the whole, he feels to be right in his particular case and on each particular occasion.

Then we have the huge domain of Politics. The very existence of Liberal and Conservative shows the difficulty of which I am speaking. Beneath their more temporary causes and manifestations, these two parties do roughly answer to two great tendencies of the human mind, to the tendency which, on the whole, looks back, and clings to the past as guide and mentor in the present, and to the tendency

which, on the whole, thinks of the present and looks forward to the future. The catchwords of the Tory and the Radical are not *mere* catchwords. They do indicate that the right adjustment of the claims of past and present and future are so difficult that irresistibly men are divided into parties, more or less one-sided and partial. The philosopher in his chamber may attempt to be fair all round, to satisfy every need and claim, but if he seek to carry his fairness into action, it will probably result in sterility. In human affairs to be completely balanced seems to end in sheer suspense.

If in politics the existence of Whig and Tory does not surprise us, neither should the same phenomena surprise us in religion. Here too we can but survey, and attempt to do justice to, the claims of old and new, of conservatism and progress, and here too we shall probably find that the persons who have set their mark upon action have usually been somewhat one-sided, whether in one direction or the other.

It does not require much depth or length of reflection to see that any given religion must maintain close relations with its past. It was finely pointed out from this very place a week ago that to possess hopes one must usually possess memories as well. The men of the

present generation are links in a chain, and if many and better links are to come, there are also many links behind us. Unless we desire to found a new creed, and wholly to break with the past, we must maintain our relations with that past both in word and deed. We bear the old name: our religion must also partly be filled with the old content. There must be enough of the past in the present to maintain connection with the past, there must be enough of the present *in* that present to guarantee its existence in the future.

But we know that in an historical religion like Judaism there are especial reasons for a close connection with the past, and sometimes even especial difficulties for the adequate representation of the present. Judaism is, first of all, closely related to the Hebrew Bible. Secondly, there is the claim of tradition. Thirdly, there is the great general mass of Jews with whom we desire to keep in touch.

Each of these reasons and facts has its own special difficulties for those of us who are touched with the spirit of modernity and of liberalism.

Criticism and philosophy make us regard the Bible in a different light from our fathers. Tradition no longer seems to us binding in the sense

that it was binding in times of old, or in the sense in which it is binding to an orthodox Jew in Russia to-day. We no longer, that is, believe in the inspiration of the Oral Law in that special and distinct sense of the word inspiration, in which it could have been used by our forefathers: in other words, we no longer believe that a definite Oral Law was actually revealed to Moses upon Mount Sinai. Lastly, we feel that so many other differences separate us from, let us say, the truly orthodox Jew of Russia or Persia that the religious forms and conceptions which wholly satisfy him cannot wholly satisfy us.

Nevertheless we realise the claims of the past and the necessity of reckoning with and fulfilling them. Hence the anxieties and difficulties, differently felt by different minds, but yet in one way or another felt by so many of us, sometimes consciously, sometimes only half consciously, sometimes clearly, sometimes vaguely, but yet influencing our action and, what is more important still, paralysing too often, or at least weakening, our religious influence over our children, our religious communion with God.

It is obvious that difficulties and anxieties such as these, depending as they do on such large causes, cannot be solved and relieved by any single mind, and still less by any single sermon.

I would only venture to put forward a few simple suggestions.

First then, I would say, we must not object to keeping up a ceremony or observing a rite because we put into it a new or modified interpretation. We must use the ceremony as a symbol ; we must use it as a vehicle. If the Passover means something different to me from what it meant to my great-grandfather, I am not therefore insincere because I celebrate it in the same way that he did. Nor because I, for example, find the sanction of the Sabbath elsewhere than it is found by the orthodox Russian Jew, does it follow that it is not to my religious advantage to celebrate and observe the Sabbath. A picture affects two persons in different ways, and though the one way may be nearer to that which the painter intended, it does not follow that the other way is not also legitimate and valuable. The child and the grown man, the rustic and the philosopher, both believe in God, but their conceptions of Him are very different. May they not both call Him by the same name, and both rightly declare that they believe in God ?

One of the objects of ceremonial is to afford the means of religious combination and fellowship. This is only possible if, within certain wide limits, the same rites are capable of many

interpretations. Prayer, for instance, means different things to different people ; public worship is used differently by different temperaments. Yet this is no effective argument against our meeting together and using the one means in different ways but to a single end. No one need hesitate to observe the Passover because he does not happen to believe in the miraculous incidents recorded in the Book of Exodus. The same rite can be observed from more than one point of view, and charged with more than one interpretation.

Secondly, I think we do well to recall to mind the ordinary arguments for the need of ceremonial observance in our individual lives. The arguments are familiar, but not necessarily invalid because familiar. The metaphor of soul and body is a good metaphor ; the advantage of visible reminders, of concrete restraints and self-denials, is a real advantage. No one should fail to weigh such arguments carefully who has to do with the upbringing of children. Few can even afford to neglect them in their own religious life.

We have also to remember that we cannot easily create ceremonial : rites are not easily made to order. And even if we could or can create them, the advantage of the old as forming

a link and sign of union between ourselves and other Jews in other lands is not lightly to be ignored. Therefore we must not incautiously or readily give up any old custom or ceremonial unless it conflict with a new truth, or is wholly incapable of assuming a fresh meaning. We must only come out of the Old Path if it runs counter to that New Song which is also and equally a necessity and a claim. It is easy to cut down a tree : it sometimes takes a long time before a new tree can be reared in the place of the old. It is perhaps better to maintain a rite a little too long than to abandon it a little too soon.

Jewish rites and ceremonials, both in our private life and our public worship, rest partly upon the Bible and partly upon tradition and Rabbinical Law. To make no adequate distinction between these two foundations is unwise and unfortunate ; to make too violent a severance or contrast between them leads to difficulty and sterilisation. The holy days of the Pentateuch, for example, stand on a different footing from those instituted in post-biblical times. Nevertheless, while Passover has more authority than the Fast of Ab, Chanukah is a far nobler and more valuable festival than Purim. We cannot make the Bible the exclusive test of observ-

ance ; yet we should rightly maintain the principle that a biblical ordinance is to be surrendered with greater reluctance than a Rabbinical ordinance, where other things are equal. In spite of Geiger's famous dictum about the dietary laws, *sint ut sunt aut non sint*, there is something to be said for maintaining the biblical injunctions and abandoning the Rabbinical additions. Nevertheless, there is a certain principle of life in the very accretions of Rabbinism. The Rabbis have been absurdly claimed as reformers and progressists ; yet childish or even disingenuous as such an argument is, it does contain its grain of truth. Rabbinism seems to imply the belief that God is immanent in history, that He impels and directs what is best to-day as He impelled or directed what was best of old ; that the development and progress of our religion to-day are as much His work and will as its development and progress in the days of Isaiah or of Ezra. It was a fine impulse, I think, of the Rabbis when they declared that God had "commanded" us to "kindle the light of Chanukah" no less than He had "commanded" us "to dwell in booths." *We* should not venture to make a similar statement for any definite act ; our conceptions of God and of His relation to man would not admit of it ; yet no forward movement is capable of success unless

we feel sincerely that God is with us and among us, unless we can frame, and in all honesty repeat, the blessing : "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, who has sanctified us by Thy Truth, and hast commanded us to progress and develop in our worship and knowledge of Thee."

The decay of ceremonial and the neglect of forms are the frequent subject of pulpit complaint. But they are perhaps not sufficiently explained. The causes of this neglect and decay should also be investigated : till you know the causes, you cannot find the remedy. I fully admit that among those causes are some which are discreditable. Without the pressure of persecution to keep them back, men and women are inclined to throw off restraints and regulations which are often irksome and inconvenient, and may sometimes seem a little ridiculous in the eyes of the outer world. The truth that religion is not contained in forms, and that the highest religion is even independent of "forms," may also have its effect in inducing some persons to abandon them. We are suffering from a recoil. Judaism had become overburdened with forms and minutiae : the charge of the "kitchen religion" is not wholly unfounded among certain of its nominal adherents (for a formalist can be even more a nominal Jew than

one who is wholly unobservant), and thus from a barren, formal, and legal orthodoxy some have passed rapidly to the other extreme. But we know that other and deeper reasons have also combined to produce the result which, in its excess and extent, I too deplore. Many of the forms seem too "national" or "oriental" to some persons; they seem unedifying or unappealing to others. At the bottom of their minds, if not in the full light of consciousness, a large number of people do think differently of the Bible and of Rabbinical tradition from their forefathers; they have lost the sanction of legal authority; they have lost the sanction of sentiment; they have yet to gain the sanction of reason, the hardest and surely the purest sanction of all.

It is this sanction which we must seek to fashion while still there is time. We have to seek to retain the observance of forms and ceremonies by fresh arguments which will adequately appeal to the understanding. On some of these arguments I have already dwelt. A few rarely touched spirits can perhaps dispense with forms in grown manhood and womanhood; scarcely any can dispense with them when young. Even those who feel—and who can be quite sure that the feeling is accurate?—that they can do with-

out them for themselves must observe and maintain them for the sake of the generation to come. Everybody, said Kant, must act so that the motive upon which his action is based could become a maxim for humanity. Applying this rule of the great philosopher, we may say that every one of us ought to act in matters of religion as if what he did and refrained from doing were capable of universal application. As he does, so in his opinion might all others do.

It is unnecessary to touch upon the feebleness of those who give up the externals of religion or Judaism from laziness or indifference. More important is it to remember the validity of the argument that the restraints, abnegations, and reminders of ceremonial are calculated to act with effect and benefit upon a large number of persons. Most important of all, however, is the argument that a biblical rite, such as the Passover, is not to be neglected and need not be abandoned, because some of us no longer believe that when it says in the Bible, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying," Moses heard a divine voice, and at once wrote down to dictation the very words of God. The Passover rite is to be justified by history, and by the religious meaning which can now be assigned to it. We must believe the more that God is revealed in history,

in order that we may not suffer by any loss of belief in verbal inspiration and in miracles.

And, finally, the old must be connected with, and oftentimes must pass over into the new. "Sing unto the Lord a new song." That is quite as imperative a duty as the injunction of Jeremiah. The old must be given new life—in some cases by receiving new meanings, in others by gradual adaptation and transformation. I said in the beginning of this sermon that it is not easy to create new forms and ceremonials. That is true. But we can gradually transfigure and refashion the old forms in order to preserve them and keep them alive, and make them serve our purpose and needs. For religious forms must be something more than archæological curiosities, something more than ancient quaintnesses; they must not merely remind us of our youth, but they must remind us of God.

For we have new songs to sing. Our religion expands and develops, and for this development we need new utterance and expression. Thus in our public prayer we require three things: we require the old unchanged, we require the old adapted, and we require also the new. In the services of our Union we have made some attempt to satisfy all those requirements. We shall, I believe, satisfy them more fully in the

revised and enlarged Prayer Book, which will shortly, I hope, be in use. A new song is, for instance, expressed in the seventh prayer of our little book, in which we declare that we see God's handiwork in the differences which prevail in the minds of men, where we pray "for all men, His children, our brethren," and end with the words, "may we, recognising that differences of thought and belief are of thine implanting, strive the more zealously to be one in charity and brotherly love." That is a completely new note. It is a new song, and I rejoice that we should sing it. You could find no parallel to it in any prayer of olden time. It is a new thought for which we thank God; it is a new religious development, and it needed expression in our public prayers.

It is indeed no easy task to combine rightly, to satisfy properly, the claims of the Old and of the New. It demands delicacy of feeling, sensitiveness alike to historic propriety and to modern requirements. The adjustment is difficult, so too are the due harmony, the right balance, the tactful blending of the two desiderata. Both in our private and public life, in our private and public worship, there will doubtless be some jagged edges, some odd inconsistencies, some crudities and mistakes. But let us not be dis-

turbed by these, nor by the criticisms which they evoke. If we are honest and true, our efforts will justify themselves. We must not give up for the sake of ease or comfort; we must not add for the sake of novelty and change. In all we keep and in all we abandon, in all we modify and in all we add, we must have reason for our guide and religion for our goal. We will stand in the old paths where we honestly can, but we will also sing in them our new songs, and thus, not forgetful of the past, but mindful too of the present and of the future, we shall render the best service we can to Judaism and to God.

April 25, 1903.

XIV

IMPATIENCE IN PRAYER

“Be not impatient in prayer.”—BEN SIRA, vii. 10.

THE discovery of the Hebrew original of the Apocryphal book known as Ecclesiasticus has restored this text to us. It is lost in the Greek version, but the Hebrew preserves it. *Be not impatient in prayer.* It is one of the wisest things ever said on the subject. Impatient our prayer mostly is ; yet impatience destroys at least the half of our prayer's worth. The Hebrew noun תפלה, *prayer*, is of the same root as the Hebrew verb for *judge, arbitrate*. An element of judgment or deliberation is the requisite complement to the flow, the rush of spiritual emotion. The two elements—consideration and free abandonment, restraint and impulse—must go together to compose the genuine idea of prayer. Impatience is the child's posture. Tom Tulliver's faith in prayer broke down when, after praying in bed overnight for divine help, he still could not remember his Latin verbs in school next

day. We must approach God as children: simple, reliant, trustful. But we must not approach Him childishly. "Wait thou for the Lord," says the Psalmist; or, as the fine English Prayer Book version has it: "O tarry thou the Lord's leisure," "Be strong; let thine heart take courage; yea, wait thou for the Lord."

From one form of impatience Judaism should save us. There is a species of black despair which fills the soul with a desolation indistinguishable from impatient resentment. If God made me an irreclaimable sinner, then the only address I can honestly make to Him is not renunciation of myself, but denunciation of His injustice. Judaism indeed teaches the doctrine that man is sinful, but it does not teach that sin is inevitable. In the Bible and Talmud very striking language is used of the power and all-pervadingness of sin. But in the main, Judaism teaches that we are not given over into the hand of sin, bound and powerless. Man can and must control the evil to which he is liable. Among the means by which this control is effected, foremost stands prayer. But if we come to pray in the impatient spirit which our text reproves, we imperil our hope of victory. You deny God, the pure source of your soul, when you regard yourself as irre-

trievably sunk in sin ; but you are equally far from truly believing in Him when you are puffed up in self-righteousness. Prayer, repentance, practical striving, are the means not to self-righteousness, but to the full realisation of God's righteousness. All that we can do cannot entitle us to salvation ; but we must do our utmost as the condition of receiving salvation. Our life is short, but it is long enough if it be filled with patient, persistent acceptance of this double truth. But the impatient man is short-lived, though he live to the age of Methuselah.

Prayer is at its best when it leaves us determined at one and the same time to do our best, and to rely on God ; when it reveals to us the gap between ourselves and God, and yet rouses in us the joyful certitude that God's mercy and love will complete the bridge we ourselves begin. A man must purify his heart *before* he prays, said the Rabbi. And after he has prayed? *After* Rabbi Alexandrai had prayed, says the Talmud, he used to speak thus : "Master of the Universe, it is revealed and made known before Thee that it is our will to do Thy will, and what impedes ? The leaven in the dough and the pressure of political interference !" *i.e.* our sinful passions from within and

worldly hindrances from without impel us to place our will before God's will. "More than all things needing watchfulness," says the Proverb, "diligently guard thy heart, for out of it come the issues of life." Watchfulness, not impatience, is our need, knowing we are human; rejoicing that God is God, giving Him ready, cheerful service, whether the service be the work of our hands, our most strenuous efforts towards righteousness, or that other service which we call prayer, and which the Midrash so beautifully terms: עבודה שבלב: "the service of the heart." "Ye shall serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart," says Deuteronomy. Whereupon, the Sifri, as well as the Talmud, asks: "Is there indeed a service of the heart?" Yea, answer the Rabbis, "the heart's service is prayer." Service, long, faithful, unfaltering. "Be not impatient in prayer," says Ben Sira.

Another form of impatience in prayer is the familiar: How long, O Lord? We cry, and receive for answer the echo of our cry. Is it man's lot, Israel's lot, always to suffer; God's part always to chastise? Our impatience blinds us to the fact that, while we can still pray—even though our prayer be a sigh—God is not loading us beyond our strength.

The Rabbis tell us that God oft chastises us

out of His love for us ; and they ask, "What are chastisements of love?" One answer they give is this : "Chastisements of love are afflictions which still leave us the power to pray," and they quote Psalm lxvi. 20 : "Blessed be God who has not taken from me my prayer and His love." Suffering may be acute, but it is not crushing so long as you can still pray under it, so long as in Gabirol's noble phrase you can flee from God to God, and when your lips can frame no words, you can still lay before God your inarticulate longings. The gates of tears are never shut against you, says the Talmud. Israel said before God : "We know not Thy law, we cannot come before Thee with it." And God answered : "Weep unto Me, I will answer." The inarticulate tears of the patient heart may tell God more, may move God more, than the eloquent phrases of impatient self-importance. "I afflict you," says God, "but come, cry to me." Very touchingly does the Midrash tell us that God wishes us to cry unto Him : that He longs to hear our voice : He yearns for Israel's supplications. Just as He chastises us to discipline us, so, as it were, He tortures us that He may force from us the prayer which we refuse to yield when we are free from wracking pain. The divine ear

yearns for our human voice. It is a profound, mystical thought, expressed with both quaintness and tenderness in the following passage from Exodus Rabba (§ xxi. 5):—

“Why did God bring Israel into the extremity of danger at the Red Sea before saving him? Because He longed to hear Israel’s prayer. Said R. Joshua b. Levi, To what is the matter like? To a king who was once travelling on the way, and a daughter of kings cried to him: ‘I pray thee, deliver me out of the hand of these robbers.’ The king obeyed, and rescued her. After a while he wished to make her his wife; he longed to hear her sweet accents again, but she was silent. What did the king do? He hired the robbers again to set upon the princess, to cause her again to cry out, that he might hear her voice. So soon as the robbers came upon her, she began to cry for the king. And he, hastening to her side, said: ‘This is what I yearned for, to hear thy voice.’ Thus it was with Israel. When they were in Egypt, enslaved, they began to cry out, and hang their eyes on God: as it is written: *And it came pass . . . that the children of Israel sighed because of their bondage . . . and they cried. . . .* Then it immediately follows: *And God looked upon the children of Israel.* He began to take

them forth thence with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. And God wished to hear their voice a second time, but they were unwilling. What did He do ? He incited Pharaoh to pursue after them, as it is said, *And He drew Pharaoh near*. Immediately the children of Israel cried unto the Lord. In that hour God said : 'For this I have been seeking, to hear your voice,' as it is written in the Song of Songs, My dove in the clefts of the rock, let me hear thy voice ; thy voice, the same voice which I first heard in Egypt."

We will not to-day attempt to search into the profound depths of this idea of the correlation between God and man : how God is only King when there are men to proclaim Him, how God is only love when there are men to appeal to His affection. "Prayer," said Henry Vaughan, "is the universe in tune." It is, indeed, the harmony of heaven and earth. God is not God unless man admits Him so : He is King when man proclaims Him. What wondrous dignity this thought gives to our lives : what worthiness to our prayers and praises ! And then there is the other side to this truth, exquisitely brought out in the Midrashic passage which I have just quoted. In all our impatience with God, what of His patience with us ? We yearn for His mercy ;

He yearns for our praise. How oft He gives His mercy ; how seldom we our praise. He is bountiful, we are niggardly. He dwelleth amid the praises of Israel, and we, silent, irresponsible, deny Him a home in our midst. In all the tenderness of the Midrashic idea there is a harsh, condemnatory note. God saved us ; He would hear our voice again ; but we would not speak. We would not praise, He forced us to cry. We to be impatient in prayer when our very prayer, such as it is, is wrung from us by God's patience ! We shut our eyes to our opportunities. We weep when we must ; but we do not smile when we may. We pass our lives blind to our chances—our manifold occasions for praise.

The Mechilta, another ancient Midrash, commenting on the musical accompaniments of the Song of Moses at the Red Sea, remarks : "Whence did they get musical instruments in the wilderness ? Men of faith carried them from Egypt, feeling sure that God would give them occasion to use them." Our hearts are querulous, our faith out-worn, we have time for impatient lamentation ; how patient we are in such impatience ! there is no end to our complaints. But for gratitude and praise we have less heart. *We* do not carry our harps

with us into the wilderness. Yet an ungrateful world is a doomed world. It is one of the leading ideas of Judaism that the world is saved by gratitude, by that conviction of our relation to God which is expressed by our praise of Him. Do you think it is a mere childish fancy which pictures heaven as peopled with celestial choirs, crowned with bright diadems, angels who touch their golden harps and, hymning, praise God and His works? And God, too, is crowned, say the Rabbis. The ministering angels take Israel's prayers, form them into garlands, and crown the Holy One with them. "All sacrifices will cease," says the Talmud, "but never the *todah*, the thank-offering; all prayers will cease, but never thanksgiving;" that is to say, in the Messianic Age there will be no sin and no expiatory sin-offering; there will be no sorrow, and no supplicatory prayers. But the thank-offering will last on in eternity, thanksgiving will never become obsolete in the realms of spiritual bliss. The voice of praise will swell into fuller chorus.

Now in all these anticipations of the Messianic Age, these foreshadowings of what is to be, we can always detect the ideals which the writers would have us set before us as inspirations in our life on earth. A world full of praise; how near to heaven would it be! We must bring

ourselves into line with such ideals. Our worship must not be impatient supplication, but patient praise. We must think less of what we lack, more of what we have. We must carry our harps with us through the wilderness, turning the desert into a paradise by our songs. Prayer is resignation, and resignation quickly passes into praise. If we are as nothing, and God is all ; if God is power and we are insignificance ; then how much the more must the contrast force us to adore the power by which alone we are strong, to return the love which makes us akin to God !

“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers: the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained.

“What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?

“Yet hast thou made him but little lower than God, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. . . .

“O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth.”

May 9, 1903.

XV

JOY AND SORROW

IN the third chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastes we read—

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven :

“A time to weep, and a time to laugh ; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.”

Tears and laughter are among the most familiar and the most characteristic signs of our common humanity. We can hardly imagine an earthly condition in which either of them should not be known. Joy and sorrow are the two deepest and most fundamental feelings of human nature. A being who was without the power of experiencing one or other of them might be below the human level ; it is difficult to conceive him as above it.

At the first blush doubtless such broad and general statements may provoke your criticism. Well, you would admit, at any rate, that life without joy is no true life at all. The desire for

happiness and the feeling of pleasure are engrained in human nature ; they are part of our very make and being. We need not here discuss the ever-vexed question of utilitarianism, and whether happiness is or is not the final good and the ultimate motive of all human endeavour. It is enough for my purpose to know that some form of happiness is, if not the end, at least *one* end of our life on earth, and that some form of joy is desirable by and for every one of us. It is a law of our being that pleasure or pain accompanies activity ; the pleasure may vary from the pleasure of eating a strawberry to the joy of saving a comrade's life at the peril of our own, but though the pleasure is not the end, it is all the same, and sometimes for the very reason that it is not the end, an addition to and accompaniment of the act. The ideal life includes its elements and factors of joy.

Religion, too, is never without its satisfactions. If a perfect or golden age be imagined in the future upon earth, it is always one in which there is happiness ; if a heaven be conceived as the place or the state of the individual soul after death, there too, and then too, happiness is believed to be an integral portion of the soul's condition beyond the grave. What the happiness of pure spirit may be, we can scarcely conceive.

And even on earth the happiness of a holy worshipper communing with God differs from the happiness of a man whose horse has won the Derby, so widely and deeply as scarcely, it might seem, to merit the community of name. Nevertheless, both are feelings of satisfaction, of self-realisation, of achievement, and both have enough common elements, physiologically and psychologically, to justify us in calling both of them phases of happiness or joy.

He who has never felt happy has missed half his manhood. No normal human life is without joy ; it is probable that hardly any man can have ever existed without having felt satisfaction in something which he has done or which has befallen him.

But if we say at once that life would be no life without happiness and joy, can we not also say that we can hardly realise life without sorrow ? Life, as we know it, is made, and has been made, glorious and precious to us by sorrow as much as by joy. Those few persons who have known no sorrows have lost perhaps as much as those who have known no joys. Need I speak here—it is surely unnecessary—of sorrow's discipline, how it has brought out much of what is greatest and best in human nature, how it trains and educates us and brings us nearer to God ? It is

because man has been "crowned" with "attributes of woe," that he has been able to prove that his life is "not as idle ore,

"But iron dug from central gloom
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom
To shape and use."

But it is not merely the education of sorrow upon which I would lay stress. Sorrow possesses in itself a poetry and a dignity, without which human life, as we know it, would be the poorer. This is one of the compensations of misery. It is not an explanation of the mystery of evil, but it is a palliative and an alleviation. How much poorer life would be if, in addition to the "Merry Wives of Windsor," there were not also "Hamlet" and "Othello." Moreover, if we did not experience sadness ourselves, we should not understand or realise it in the experience of others. Not only that no fresh "King Lear" could ever be written, but the old "King Lear" would become unintelligible and unmeaning.

The truth is that, at the very heart of the universe, there seems to reside a Janus-faced mystery, of which human joy and human sorrow are, as it were, the distant echoes, two of its myriad expressions, shadows of illimitable reality.

Or, perhaps, we should rather say that in the mystic unity of the All, in the very core of the Godhead, joy and sorrow are merged together into something deeper, fuller, and more wonderful. No man can see God's face ; in other words, none can realise His nature, or measure the infinite aspects of the richness of His being. But we may humbly surmise that what we call sorrow and what we call joy have each their far-off equivalent in the one Divine Father, from whom we owe all that is best and greatest in ourselves.

Sorrow is not always merely sorrow. It points forward to something more profound, to something which is not indeed joy, but transcends and includes it. Do such words seem empty to you ? You will at least acknowledge that there is a mystery in things and a mystery in life, and that somehow this mystery is even more brought home and revealed to us by sorrow than by joy. You will also acknowledge that he who has never felt awe, who has not been sensible of mystery, has lost something of the deepness of life, has lived more on the surface, is less interesting, less profound. It is not merely the *transitoriness* of human life which gives us from time to time that strange sense of yearning and sadness, but it is rather the *mystery* of man, the touch of infinitude which pervades his finiteness, the divine

image amid its sensuous environment. The feeling which is expressed by the untranslatable German word "Wehmuth," and partly also by the English word, "wistfulness," is surely not a mere passing sentiment which has no justification at the heart of reality. Joy is real, but sorrow has a touch of reality also, and sorrow has its bitter sweet, its moods of haunting delicacy and tenderness, where sadness is half merged in joy. Perhaps all the universe may be mystically represented as yearning towards God, and in this eternal and universal longing the special yearnings of man find their place and explanation. Man is never completely satisfied ; there is always a beyond ; and in the very incompleteness of endeavour there seems sometimes a certain sad sweetness which is at least as precious as the sense of attainment and satisfaction. It is hard to think that the world would be merely richer if the feelings and the realities, for which the words pathos and the pathetic stand, had no longer an existence. Yet how could there be pathos without sorrow ?

I have dwelt upon these subtle and complicated matters rather emphatically, because the point which I wish to make is that religion must take serious account of both of these fundamental elements of human nature—it

must take account of and ennoble both sorrow and joy, both sadness and gladness. Religion must be a power both in calamity and in prosperity. It has to reckon with every aspect of life.

No phrase in Bacon's essays is more familiar than the epigram: "Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New." We have, however, to remember that Bacon himself continues to say: "Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon." It is one of the unfortunate results of controversy that it leads to exaggeration. One-sidedness on the one hand leads to one-sidedness upon the other. Christian over-emphasis produces Jewish over-emphasis, and the natural development of one religion (especially if its adherents are in a small minority) is impeded by a more or less conscious opposition to another. Judaism is declared to be a religion of joy, and this declaration is right. Joy in the ultimate scheme of things takes precedence over sorrow. But we must not on that account deny the greatness and importance of sorrow, and our religion

must be also a religion of sorrow, in the sense that it must use sorrow for its own ends.

We are often told by Jewish preachers that Christianity regards this earthly life as a vale of tears, in which gloom and sadness are right and appropriate. Joy is reserved for the world to come. In contrast to this harsh conception of life, we are told that Judaism is a religion of gladness, that we are placed by God in a beautiful world which we are intended to enjoy, and that the very exercises and commandments of religion are designed to produce satisfaction and delight. I do not propose to criticise this one-sided criticism of the religion of our neighbours, nor would I wish to deny the large measure of truth which this conception of Judaism contains. It is well indeed that Judaism has been an optimistic creed, and that its ordinances have been greatly connected with gladness. For how else could the Jews have endured the immense and secular burden of sorrows which have been their lot? Think of what has recently happened in Russia; think of the horrors which have been perpetrated in Kishineff. Still better: do not merely think of them, but help to relieve them even a little by sending succour to the sufferers and the afflicted. The consolations and joys of religion must have been powerful indeed to act as a

make-weight against the cruelties and injustice of man, and thus surely Judaism has ever been a religion of sorrow in this sense that it has been the religion of the sorrowful. It has spoken of the chastisements of love and of the atoning sufferings of the righteous. It would probably be found that in the most spontaneous utterances of Jewish literature there was a somewhat less emphatic insistence upon joy than there is where the speakers and teachers are seeking to establish differences between their own religion and their neighbours', and to exalt the one at the expense of the other.

But let us pass from these semi-historical and semi-polemical considerations to dwell for a few brief moments upon the subject itself, upon the facts as they now are, or as it seems good to us that they now should be.

We have seen that sorrow, in one or other of its hundred forms, is not only an earthly phenomenon, but also not wholly, and in every aspect of it, an evil. It has connections, or relations, with the universe which seem not merely casual, human, and temporary, but also wider, closer, and more real. Some of its phases are hateful and degrading; others sweeten and ennoble. Religion transfigures sorrow, and sorrow strengthens and purifies religion. Sorrow and suffering have

shaken the race out of the mere enjoyment of the material; they have given it the capacity for the spiritual. They have not revealed the mystery; they have not solved the riddle; but they have caused humanity to see that there *is* a riddle, that there *is* a mystery. And this perception is a part of our human privilege. They have made man look away from the pleasures of the moment into the deep wonders beyond. And what sorrow and suffering have done for the race, as a whole, they can sometimes also effect for the individual.

We are brought face to face with reality, and the source of reality is God. We are made to realise the mystery. Sorrow purifies and strengthens; it also tends to make us more gentle and open-eyed, more susceptible to the influences of the spiritual. Through the transitory we gaze under the influence of sorrow into the eternal.

Thus religion must use sorrow and be shaped by sorrow. It has to see that suffering should, so far as possible, lead us up instead of dragging us down. It must try that sorrow should not deaden us, but that it should quicken our sensibilities, and enable us to discern more rather than to understand less. It must endeavour that sorrow should emancipate us from the

shackles of the material, and make us sensitive to the promptings and teachings of the spiritual. Sorrow, therefore, is to be tempered and made holy by religion, just as religion must be made purer, deeper, and more spiritual by sorrow. The two must act reciprocally upon each other. We cannot imagine a religion which does not take account of and is not partly conditioned by sorrow, while sorrow without religion tends to become merely degrading or deadening. The mystery of life and of the world, of that world which, while full of pain and horror, is also full of strangeness and awe and wonder, of wistfulness and yearning, is revealed in sorrow as well as in joy, and is perhaps at its very essence and heart a union of both. Therefore religion, like life, must be constituted by sorrow as well as by joy, and it must use both for its self-revelation within the hearts of mankind.

Perhaps it will rest with each individual and his own lot in life how far religion is with him connected with sorrow and how far it is connected with joy. Yet we may rightly say that, vitally as sorrow is related to religion, joy is still more closely united to it. For religion must not merely use and sanctify joy; it must create it. The question arises, How is this double action of religion to be attained? We have to

use our joy religiously ; we have to make ourselves capable of feeling religious joy. The two requirements are not contradictory, yet they may become so. Not all joy can be given a religious tone, and some lower joys are positively inimical to the higher joys. This is a commonplace, but it is dangerous to ignore it. No pleasure is justifiable which cannot be sanctified by religion, or, at any rate, which lessens the capacity for pleasures which are susceptible of such sanctification. That was the excellence and *rationale* of the Rabbinic system which covered every ordinary branch of life with a network of religious prescriptions. Eating and drinking, washing and dressing, for instance, were given in this way a religious dignity and sanctification. It was doubly degrading and wicked to use the juice of the grape to excess and intoxication, seeing that it is made use of in a religious rite, and God's blessing is invoked over wine as well as over bread. Religion, therefore, has been used to exercise a humanising, mellowing, and restraining influence over joy ; to give it distinction ; to make the web of the material shot through with light and radiance from the spiritual and the unseen.

It would, therefore, seem that pleasure, like

sorrow, can either lead towards God or away from Him. It can either quicken or deaden our spiritual hearing. It can either purify or coarsen. How careful then should educators be that they make children take pleasure in the right sources of pleasure, which are susceptible of sanctification or which tend in the direction of the spiritual. Some of you will remember the many superb passages in which Ruskin deals with his favourite subject of the relation of Taste to Character. "The entire object," he exclaims, "of true education is to make people not merely do the right things, but enjoy the right things: not merely industrious, but to love industry; not merely learned, but to love knowledge; not merely pure, but to love purity; not merely just, but to hunger and thirst after justice."

So we would say as regards religion. Joy must not only be sanctified by religion; it must be created by it. We must not only be capable of using joy religiously; we must be capable of religious joy. How many of us here have these dual capacities? How many of us nowadays can be truly said "to rejoice before the Lord their God"? This is indeed the hardest, as it is the noblest, of all the joys. It is for us so to discipline and educate our children and ourselves that we may be able to feel it. As regards public

worship, one of the reasons for our own services is that we want people not merely to come to synagogue as a duty but as a pleasure, and we contend that for a very large number of persons the statutory services, as they now are conducted, evoke no religious satisfaction. But over and above public worship there is private worship, there is prayer, there is communion, there is faith. All these can cause, or may be combined with, joy. To that end purity is one means, simplicity of life is another. Still more important is exercise. Those who never walk can find no pleasure in walking; those who never pray can find no pleasure in prayer. How the joys of religion should be attained is, however, a separate subject, needing special treatment and careful inquiry. For to-day it is enough to bid you remember that there is a time to weep and a time to laugh, and that both joy and sorrow seem deep rooted in our human nature and in the realities of the world. Both of them are essential features of religion upon earth, both of them are pathways which may lead us towards God.

May 16, 1903.

XVI

A FENCE TO THE LAW

"MAKE a fence round the Law." These words are taken from the beginning of the treatise *Abot* of the Mishna, commonly known as the "Ethics of the Fathers." This is quite the best known work of Rabbinic literature ; it has found its way into the Jewish Prayer Book, and has probably been translated into every European language. It has been rendered familiar to the English reader by its translation in the *Authorised Daily Prayer Book* whilst those who wish to study it with more care, will find all the help they need in the edition of Dr. Charles Taylor. The popularity of the "Ethics of the Fathers" has been justly earned. The contents of the treatise are interesting throughout, and nearly always attain a high degree of genuine excellence. Whilst the other parts of the Mishna deal mainly with the details of ritual observance or of civil and criminal law, we find here the sayings of the Rabbis on spiritual religion and practical

morality. It is not without reason that the compilers of the Talmud advise those who desire to be pious to study and apply the contents of this treatise. So far as piety is the result of theoretical teaching, there was no book in their possession, apart from the Bible itself, so calculated to foster its growth.

In the first chapter of the "Ethics," the compiler attempts to carry forward the chain of oral tradition from the giving of the law on Sinai to the generations that followed Hillel and Shammai. We are given the names of those Rabbis who successively presided over the Sanhedrin, and to each is attributed a striking word of advice, at times addressed to the individual Israelite, at times to the judge or teacher, who was responsible for the welfare of a whole community. The first set of sayings is not, however, attributed to any individual, but to the "men of the great synagogue"—an assembly said to have been convened by Ezra, and to have continued to flourish for over a century. They are credited with having fixed the canon of Scripture, and with having arranged the general lines on which were based the services of the Temple and of the synagogue. Many modern scholars deny that the "great synagogue" had any real existence, but

the traditions relating to it correspond at least with the undoubted fact that it was to the labours of Ezra and his successors that we owe the foundations on which the whole structure of Rabbinical Judaism was afterwards based. The three sayings attributed in the "Ethics of the Fathers" to the men of the "great synagogue" are very significant. The first two of these utterances were, "Be patient in judgment and train up many pupils"—advice in which enthusiasm for propaganda was commingled with caution and candour. Still more notable was the saying which I have chosen for my text to-day. Few maxims have more vitally affected the whole history of Judaism than that which directs us to make a fence round the law. The Rabbis of the Talmud and the codifiers of Jewish law were constantly engaged in giving every sort of development to this principle.

"Make a fence round the law"—how far is this good advice? It is not a question that can be answered by a simple "Yes" or "No." There are a number of cases that must be distinguished, there are many kinds of laws, many varieties of fences. Also, there are more possible points of view than one from which the precepts of positive religion may be regarded, and consequently the importance of attention to details

will not appear alike to all. If we believe with Akiba that countless rules of divine authority are deducible from every letter of the Mosaic Law, we must run no risk of trespassing on forbidden ground. Thus we must interpret the fourth commandment of the Decalogue as a lawyer would read the provisions of an Act of Parliament. We shall find it quite natural to explain that מלאכה, "work," is a technical term which includes all those operations which are so described elsewhere in the Book of Exodus in connection with the erection of the Tabernacle. We shall soon find ourselves unable to put up an umbrella or ring the house-bell on the Sabbath, lest we perform an act which is analogous to the building of a tent or the preparation of a musical instrument. But we shall arrive at a very different conclusion if we believe that the obligation to rest on the Sabbath depends essentially upon a sanction from within, and that it is imposed upon us by the law of God that speaks to our heart. We shall then hold that to keep the Sabbath holy means to rest from our ordinary avocations and to refresh our hearts by prayer and praise. We may well recognise that a general uniformity in regard to the methods of Sabbath observance is expedient, but we shall feel quite free to adapt

details according to our individual feelings, modified by a reasonable regard for such practices as are hallowed by tradition and are, in the abstract, desirable or at least harmless. We shall even recognise a certain danger in over-scrupulousness in respect of things indifferent, as tending rather to distract our conscience from those moral issues which are really vital.

Another variety of ritual fences, provided for by the Rabbis, has perhaps more permanent value for us. The idea underlying them is that a religious duty should not be postponed until the last available moment. Thus we are told that when a man comes home from work at close of day, he should not eat and sleep, thinking that he will afterwards say the שמע and his evening prayers; if he acts thus, he may remain asleep, and the time for worship may pass. Rather let him study the law on his return from the field, and afterwards pray, before he sits down to his meal. So also he should cease from work on Friday evening some short time before it is actually dusk. This is a principle which is not solely or mainly applicable to ritual observances. It is far worse to put off the performance of our ordinary duties than to postpone saying our

prayers. Still we may well remind ourselves not to await convenient opportunities for the practice of religious rites; we must make our own opportunities, or we shall find that they never present themselves. "Say not," said Hillel, "when I have leisure I will study the law; perchance thou wilt never have leisure."

"Make a fence round the law." In a larger sense, our text supplies a justification, at once necessary and sufficient, for all the prescriptions of positive religion. The observance of Sabbaths and festivals, public worship, with its accompanying ceremonial, are certainly no ends in themselves. Their purpose is to hedge round our lives with sacred thoughts and sacred symbols which will give us the heart to perform our destined work. Surely we should welcome all the means of grace that have been provided to bring home to us the thought of God and of goodness. Although these ideas are in truth the only abiding realities, there is only too great a fear that we may forget them in the storm and stress of life.

"The world is too much with me, and its din
Prevents my search eternal peace to win."

Sin and indifference are only too easy; religion, as the Midrash beautifully expresses it,

is a hedge, not of thorns but of lilies, that shows us the path wherein we should walk.

“Make a fence round the law.” The principle can well be applied also to the moral law. It is unsafe to venture to the extreme edge of a cliff. It is just as unsafe to define too closely the limits of moral obligation. A mediæval writer, Isaac Abuav, rightly places in the foreground of religious excellences the quality of avoiding the undue pursuit of things permitted. It is good to realise the joy of life, but pleasure may become self-indulgence before we are conscious that we have overstepped the line of duty. We have the right to look forward to the attainment of an honourable ambition, but unless this desire is balanced by wider and more impersonal aspirations, we shall become grasping and selfish, embittered in failure and thankless in success. The merely negative virtue, which refrains from active misconduct, will not prevent the atrophy of every generous faculty. To moderate our desires and our passions, we need to rely not on a calculated insensibility but on a purer impulse than one which is merely self-regarding. Jerusalem was laid waste, say the Rabbis, because its citizens insisted on the exact letter of the law instead of giving it the most generous interpretation of which it was capable. In order to carry

out aright the duty which we owe to our neighbour and that which we owe to our higher self, we need to "make a fence round the law," to aim at a high ideal rather than at the average morality of the society in which we live.

Again, we need to make a fence to the law, in that we should avoid actions which may be harmless in themselves but may lead us into danger. A healthy character will be able to resist hostile environment; it is useless, in a workaday world, to expect that we can shut ourselves off from all contact with evil. At the same time we have no right to tempt Providence by what may be described as moral foolhardiness. The prayer, "Bring me not into the power of temptation," represents a legitimate aspiration. Moralists of every race and time have insisted on the dangers arising from evil companionship and from over-familiarity with sin. It is a favourite theme throughout Jewish literature. The Rabbis illustrate the results of evil companionship from the first verse of the Psalms: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Through first meeting the wicked and accompanying them for a short distance as they walk, a man is induced to stand with them and then to

sit with them, and finally to join them in scoffing at all sacred things. Further, the man who associates himself with evil companions is as one who enters a tannery. He may take nothing away, but at best an evil odour will cling to his garments. Man is the creature of habit. Let him repeat a sinful act but once or twice, say the Rabbis, and henceforward it will appear in his sight as a thing permitted. His evil passions first accost him as wayfarers, but soon they become his guests, and finally his masters. To avoid evil, man must fortify his heart. He must fence himself round with good habits; he must strengthen his character by the example of worthy companions.

But we have not yet risen to the full height of our argument. The divine law is concerned not only with action but with the springs of action; it claims not only our outward allegiance, but the homage of our every thought. Its aim is to preserve us from sin by taking away the desire for sin. To use the language of the Book of Proverbs, God commands us to give Him our heart and to let our eyes observe His ways. It is, explain the Rabbis, as if God should say to us, "I shall know that you are Mine if you give Me your heart and your eyes, if you submit your thoughts and desires to My service." The earthly

legislator is constrained to concern himself with externals; the divine law deals with human nature as a whole. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

In order, therefore, to give the moral law its full significance, we must look behind the act of wrong-doing to the temper of mind which gives it birth. By purifying our thoughts, we must remove the motive-power which would induce sin. The most illustrious example of this teaching is to be found in the Decalogue itself. The command, "Thou shalt not covet," was a fitting climax to the words that preceded it; it showed Israel the path that they must follow if they were indeed to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. "Many people," remarks Ibn Ezra, "have wondered at this commandment, thinking it impossible for a man to refrain from longing for that which is a delight to the eyes." He goes on to explain it by means of a parable. A peasant may behold a princess in her progress through his village. However fair she be, he does not desire to marry her, for he knows that such an idea would be as great folly as the wish of a madman for wings wherewith to fly to the heavens. Even so should we rejoice in the portion which God has given us, and recognise

that we have no right to envy the good fortune of others. Then will our neighbours' possessions seem as far removed from us, as little capable of being the objects of our desire, as is the princess to the peasant.

To the thinking mind, the command, "Thou shalt not covet," is not only sublime in itself, but it appears to illustrate the method in which we should regard the moral law generally. Here I am tempted to refer to the extended application given to the commandments of the Decalogue by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount, where he also applies the principle that we should make a fence to the law. We have been taught of old not to forswear ourselves, but if we would avoid the risk of sin, we must not swear at all, but rather let our speech be, Yea, yea; nay, nay. We have been taught of old not to murder; but let us also avoid the temper of mind which renders murder possible, not being angry with our brother, or addressing him in terms of contempt and abuse. In these and similar utterances, Jesus shows himself to be a disciple, although perhaps an unwilling disciple, of the Pharisees. Amongst them also the saying was current that whether a man be innocent or guilty, he should avoid taking an oath. They taught that a simple affirmation has all the

sanctity of an oath, and further, that just as we are commanded to use righteous weights and measures, so should we see to it that our yea and nay are righteous and sincere. As regards the extended meaning to be given to the sixth commandment, there is an equally close resemblance between the language of the New Testament and of the Rabbis. "I say unto you," said Jesus, "that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." The words of the Rabbis are not less emphatic. "He that putteth his fellow to the blush in public is as one that sheddeth blood, he will have no share in the world to come; it were better for him had he fallen into a furnace of fire." As to the condemnation by Jesus of him who should say to his brother, "Thou fool," we find in one of the ancient Midrashim not only the same sentiment, but also a remarkable coincidence in phraseology. Moses, we are there told, was punished for addressing the Israelites at the waters of Meribah in the words, שִׁמְעוּ נָא הַמְּרִים, which is rendered, not "Hear now, ye rebels," but "Hear now, ye fools"—the Hebrew הַמְּרִים being so translated because, as the Rabbis say with their quaint folk etymology, the Greek for fool is μῶρος, the very same epithet as occurs in the parallel

passage in the New Testament. Elsewhere, the Rabbis warn us that we may oppress our fellow-men by word as well as by deed ; for example, if we call them by a name of which they are ashamed, or if we rake up disagreeable incidents in their past life.

There is, however, this important difference between the fence made to the ethical law by the Rabbis and that made by Jesus, in that the founder of Christianity lacks a certain moderation of tone which our teachers usually display in their treatment of moral questions. Thus the doctrine of non-resistance to evil, of turning the other cheek to the smiter, is no more than a counsel of perfection. In the Talmud it is held up as an ideal of heroism, but not enjoined as a universal duty. "Those who are oppressed but oppress not," say the Rabbis, "who are addressed with scorn but reply not, who do God's will in love and rejoice in chastisement, such are they of whom Scripture sayeth, 'Let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.'" In the Sermon on the Mount, the same sentiment receives dogmatic treatment, and gives rise to paradox and exaggeration, which tend rather to weaken than to confirm the force of moral responsibility. We see here already signs of that unhealthy

view of life, of the artificial contrast drawn between the Church and the so-called "wicked world," that has always been the great defect of Christianity as a guide of morals.

In making a fence round the law, there is a real danger to be avoided. It is unwise to fix an impossibly high level of achievement which is entirely beyond our reach, and to insist on this as being an essential condition of goodness. Our struggles to attain this standard will be unavailing; they may actually discourage us from the practice of everyday duty. It is better, say the Rabbis, to mount a height of ten handbreadths and to abide, than to climb a hundred cubits and then to fall. Human nature cannot endure an undue strain; sooner or later it has its revenge, and the consequent reaction may lead to the most unhappy results.

There is, however, little fear that many of us will become over-spiritual. The conditions of existence are far more complex and far more alluring in their material aspect than ever before. In all the pomp and circumstance of modern life we often forget to listen to the still, small voice of the spirit. It becomes the more necessary to assert the claims of the higher life, to make a fence to the moral law,

by broadening its basis and exhibiting it as founded on the principles of eternal righteousness. We must strive to value the spiritual inheritance which our fathers have left us. We must realise that, now as of old, the Lord has magnified His law and made it honourable, so that if our eyes be opened we may behold in it marvellous things. Thus shall we attain to that true wisdom that abides with those who fear God—the wisdom whose ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. May this be our portion henceforth and for evermore ! Amen.

May 30, 1903.

XVII

[MOSES, THE LEADER OF ISRAEL

I PROPOSE to speak to-day about Moses; not, however, about the giver of the laws with which his name is connected, which we have been used to look on as made for all time and suited for all our needs. It is, rather, Moses, the Leader of Israel, that is my subject; and I would ask you to let the chapter¹ that I have just read take the place of the customary short text. Happily there is no difficulty in separating the narrative portions of Exodus and Numbers from the laws that these books contain. But when we come to consider the narrative itself, the question at once arises: how is it that there has been handed down to us this detailed narration? Who would be in a position to reveal to us the many intimate communings of Moses with God? Our fathers solved this difficulty in their simple uncritical fashion: Moses must have written the Pen-

¹ Exodus iii.

tateuch. There is no such statement made in the Bible, and the more we study it the less likely does it appear. Old traditions indeed must have informed the mind or minds to which we owe this living narrative. Something there must be, too, of colour due to the narrator. Would a bald prosaic account have been better or truer? I am sure it could never have made Moses live as our Bible does. In this way and in none other can we know him.

The Bible narrative has also this very good feature, that it never hesitates to exhibit the evil as well as the good, the weakness as well as the strength of its characters. It does not moralise about them, in fact it rarely even makes a passing estimate of them. It knows no hero-worship, fortunately. For, this exaggeration of reverence we should feel for great men distorts our view by making them appear perfect (since the perfect is not truly human) and disturbs the balance of our judgment so that their very faults appear virtues. We are thus apt to blur the distinction between right and wrong. The Bible-writers, on the other hand, see for the drama they unfold but one great origin and impulse. All the great deeds of the nation were alike the direct work of God. Moses or David, Elijah or Isaiah, were but His instruments. For

all that, God does not work with mere lifeless tools, but with the spirit of man. Just because these were great men and knew God, they were able to do great work for their nation. They are well worth our study.

The great men of the world figure largely in history. Their names are familiar to all, even to those who can tell but little about them. Their achievements are known to many, and their importance is estimated and weighed by thinkers. But we do not, as a rule, derive as much advantage as we might from the records about them. For we are apt to consider them as beings of a different race from ourselves, as undertaking and carrying through successfully enterprises of which we ourselves would be quite incapable. From their lives we draw perhaps lessons more or less useful. But we do not understand them, realise them, live with them. If we think of those living men whom we have known, whom we have held in highest honour, to whom we owe most ; it is not for what they have done for us, nor what they have directly taught us, that we are most grateful. It is for the companionship that has lifted us higher, that has allowed us occasionally to breathe a purer air, "above the smoke and stir of this dim spot which men call earth." This is the priceless

gift that we have had at their hands. So, too, if we would wish to gain all that great men of the past have to give we must live with them in imagination, think their thoughts, and see for ourselves how they came to be such as the world has known them.

This may not be always easy, for your really great man is, as a rule, reserved about himself. It is his work which takes all his thoughts. But in such lives there is generally some time when what seems to us natural and predetermined lay for the man himself all clouded in doubt, when after faltering and hesitation he devotes himself to the task of his life, or when that task seems to him impossible, when even the strongest gives way for a time. We think of Shakespeare as the complete and great poet, as one "on whose forehead climb the crowns o' the world." Yet we can, if we wish, come nearer to him in his hour of weakness, when we, as it were, overhear him—

"Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least."

Elijah's almost superhuman figure becomes touchingly human, when on the morrow of his great victory he asks that he might die: "It is

enough now, O Lord! take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." So, too, in this chapter of Exodus, we may catch something of the far-away figure of Moses, and appreciate the effort with which he entered on his great task.

Moses' character has, it seems to me, been somewhat obscured by a puzzling expression in the Book of Numbers. It is said that Moses "was very meek, above all men which were upon the face of the earth." The Hebrew word *נָנִי*, translated *meek*, is very interesting. It is not used again in the historical books; with the prophets it denotes the oppressed. Amos denounces those, "that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek." But in the Psalms it is used repeatedly for "them that seek after God," with very much of its present connotation. How did this change in meaning come about? When the Psalms were written Israel was a subject race, and meekness or gentle uncomplaining patience is the virtue of a subject race. We Jews have indeed had occasion enough to practise it. It is far different qualities which are needed by the hero who is to free his race from bondage to a great kingdom, and then to weld it into a nation. He requires patience, it

is true, but also a high courage, boldness we may call it, independence, daring, and fire. These qualities the whole history of Moses shows him to possess.

Such he was the very first time that we meet him when he was grown up ; not without a certain hastiness of temper, that he kept even in later days, and that makes him, I venture to think, more human and lovable. He flashes into action on beholding the oppression of one among his brethren. A fit beginning for him, who was, above all men, to feel the misery of his people, and to devote himself to end it ! It is characteristic too of the dispirited and enslaved Hebrews, that they resent his intervention on their behalf.

So Moses fled to Midian. Some scholars have tried to show that he borrowed from Egypt many of the institutions that are to be found in the Pentateuch. But such theories have very little foundation. There is indeed more indication of Kenite influence. Certainly the shepherd's life that Moses led among the Kenites must have helped greatly to shape his character. The pastoral state was always the ideal of the Israelites. It was the life of the Patriarchs from whom they traced their descent, that of David taken from the sheepfold "to feed Jacob, God's

people and Israel his inheritance." And the shepherd leading his flock (in the East he leads and does not drive it), is a favourite image of the Psalmists for God's tender care of His people. I do not think it a mere fancy to suppose that it pointed out afresh to Moses the life natural to his people, that for which they were peculiarly adapted. He must have brooded on their wrongs, must have longed to gain for them the freedom, which he had learned to love during those peaceful days amid the silence of the wilderness. Then news was brought to him that he could safely return: "All the men are dead which sought thy life." Till then he was compelled to live away from his brethren, to choose his own life. Could he continue so now? And, on the other hand, was it possible to return and become a bondman?¹

He had not yet looked on himself as the possible deliverer of his people. We all know how we hesitate before undertaking an arduous task, when the duty does not seem to be ours rather than our neighbour's. It was to be brought home to Moses in a striking way that the duty was his. He saw on Mount Horeb a

¹ We are apt to think of Moses as an old man; and so he is depicted by painters. The narrative makes it plain that at the time of the Exodus he was still in the prime of youth.

bush which burned with fire and was not consumed. Then was his own people brought visibly before him. That too was burning fast away, and if it was not yet consumed, how long would it be till the end came and there was nothing left but ashes? It was the voice of God which spoke to him out of this bush—not indeed audible to ears of flesh, but unmistakable. It called on him and none other. “Moses, Moses,” was the cry he heard, and he knew it must be obeyed. “Here am I,” was his reply. But though he answered so readily, it was not without attempting to find every sort of reason for not undertaking this great charge. He at any rate was not the man, he was slow of speech and of a slow tongue, he lacked the authority which would make the children of Israel believe him. Any other leader would be preferable.

We cannot but contrast this with the cheerful readiness of Isaiah. “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I, send me.’” Yet Isaiah’s lifelong task was, in a sense, far less hopeful. Moses was more diffident of himself, apt to come near to despair, yet in the end always gaining fresh courage from the knowledge of God’s support. Heroism does not come with equal ease to all.

Some have a buoyancy of nature which carries them over all difficulties, so that they rarely lose heart. Others have a constant sense of possible failure, and only bear up through faithful strength of will. These latter have the heavier trial, and of these was Moses.

The voice that Moses heard was that of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. By these ancestral names and traditions did God appeal to him. This may seem somewhat strange to us who dwell by preference on our larger conceptions of God. To Moses none other was possible. For the Hebrews, as for the other races of antiquity, the single man was of little weight compared to the family, the race, the nation. These lasted while man passed away, and these were the special field of religion, the special care of God. We frequently hear it as a reproach : the Hebrew God was a national God. But it is surely no ignoble religion that subordinates individuals to the nation, and looks on God as the Guardian of all that is most permanent and noblest in mankind. Modern creeds have left this great part of religion out of sight ; but it will yet one day, I am confident, have its due. National religion has been the fruitful parent of the widest and most universal ideas, as the history of Israel shows. There is a hint

of this in the present chapter in that mysterious name, "I am that I am," by which the Israelites will know God: "This is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations."

Moses has not, however, any "revelation" in the modern sense of the word. It is a severely practical task that he is called upon to undertake: "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." No wonder that Moses shrank from it as he thought of his own little tribe, and the ancient and powerful kingdom that held it in subjection. Nothing but reliance in God's promise, "I will be with thee," could make the attempt possible. He has first to free Israel from oppression, and give them liberty to live their own life. But with that his work would be far from ended. We sometimes forget that Israel had at that time never been a nation, and lacked all traditions of national life, though it had those of a tribe. Once it was free, the whole social fabric had to be built up. Moses had to create the nation; with what difficulty history shows. He can scarcely have realised this when he first looked forward to leading Israel to Canaan. He was to find out by bitter experience that the making of a nation is a work full of disappointments,

and to be accomplished only by slow degrees and after years of patient waiting.

A word or two about the spot that saw this turning-point in Moses' life. It lay in the wild country with which he had grown familiar, so that when he had freed Israel, he led them thither to thank God. Thus as Horeb or Sinai had seen the first impulse in the life of Israel as a nation, so it is associated for all time with the Ten Commandments, that simple and great statement of the moral laws which has been recognised by the whole world. "I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." These are the words that introduce those universal commandments. Once more Horeb plays a part in Bible-narrative. It is there that Elijah, when despairing for his people, hears the still, small voice which bids him hope again that the fight which he has waged single-handed will be carried on to a successful issue by those who will come after him, Jehu and Elisha and the seven thousand who "have not bowed unto Baal." Surely his thoughts must have turned to his great predecessor, who on that same spot had dedicated himself to Israel at a juncture even less hopeful.

I pass over the account of what preceded the liberation from Egypt. Once, and once only, during that time does Moses falter. It is when he has to meet the reproaches of his own people, whose hardships have been increased by his fruitless intervention with Pharaoh. Why was he sent to do evil to his people, and not good? Many a man has felt a similar doubt since, has thought that the unforeseen ills arising from his efforts had outweighed all the good that he could perform. This is the hardest trial of all. Yet one who has strong faith conquers this doubt, and "bates no jot of heart and hope, but still bears up and steers right onward." So Moses, even when the Egyptian army had pursued after Israel, and the hard-won liberty seemed to be snatched from their grasp, meets their despairing cry with the words, "Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will work for you to-day." He *knew* that the God of Israel would save His people.

But the most difficult part of Moses' work was, I have said, to come after the discomfiture of the Egyptians. He had to make a nation of his disheartened and spiritless tribe, the men who had been born and lived as slaves, who desired nothing but the slave's content—an easy

life sitting by the fleshpots, and eating "bread to their fill." The hardships of the old life—the taskmaster's lash and other oppressions yet more cruel—were clean forgotten. No less forgotten was the debt they owed Moses—"this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt;" so they contemptuously call him. "They be almost ready to stone me," says Moses only a few days after the passage of the Red Sea. The cry right through their wanderings was, "Give us, to eat, give us to drink;" so that Moses almost despairs. How could he endure this burden alone, father and mother in one to the whole of Israel? It was too heavy for him. Death were better, and would be a grace of God. Even when the land of their hope is before them, the land flowing with milk and honey, they lack the courage to take possession of it. Their heart melts away. They break out in lamentations that they must fight to gain it. Then the voice of God seemed for a moment to suggest that it was better to abandon this people, and himself alone carry on the tradition of Israel. But a nobler thought showed him God as He really was, "slow to anger, and full of compassion." Moses realised then that with such men nothing could be effected; that

the only hope was in their children, the men who would grow up in freedom, recognising their heritage as children of Israel. In this patient work he persisted, not hurrying forward, but waiting for God's own day. That he carried it on so far that it would one day be completed, seems to me an achievement even greater than that of freeing his people from the house of bondage.

History does not tell us by what means Moses accomplished his task, though the prophets have a word once or twice on the subject: "Did ye bring Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O House of Israel?" asks Amos. And Jeremiah still more explicitly states: "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing I commanded them, saying: Hearken unto My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people; and walk ye in all the ways that I command you, that it may be well with you." "Hearken unto My voice, and I will be your God!"—this is almost an echo of the words of Exodus: "I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you for a God." By inspiring a faith in the nation's God, Moses created a

belief in the nation and its future. This peculiar close relation of God and Israel had its great dangers, exposed in later times unflinchingly by the prophets ; but it brought home to Israel the reality of God's unfailing help and protection, and made His presence a very living thing to them. To Jeremiah the marriage of God and His people began in the wilderness ; and as he looks back on those days he forgets all the doubts and weaknesses of which we read. Hear his tender words : " Thus saith the Lord, I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, how thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown."

During all these years Moses stood alone. We read, it is true, of Aaron by his side on this or that occasion. But Aaron lacked the strength of character which alone could make him a real help. Hillel gauged him very accurately when he bade his scholars : " Be pupils of Aaron, who followed peace and pursued peace." There is something saintly in the sound of this advice, but the desire for peace is a false guide when it leads a man to be one of those who, in Jeremiah's words, " have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people lightly, saying : ' Peace, peace,' when there is no peace." The priests,

of whom Aaron is the prototype, were never the decisive factors either in the political or religious crises of Israel. It is the prophets that at such times start up as leaders, listening for the voice of God, and doing and speaking fearlessly what they knew to be His will. Such a man was Moses, and therefore he has been rightly numbered among the greatest prophets.

He was not to see the completion of his life's work. He did not pass into that "good land and large" that was the subject of his hopes. "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him the land of Gilead, unto Dan; and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah unto the hinder sea; and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar." There it all lay before him in the clear light of Canaan. It is a scene that has often been dwelt on, whose pathos must appeal to all. Yet one would think that the many disheartenments and doubts had all faded away in the peaceful twilight of his days. He knew that his efforts had been rewarded, and that Israel would enter on his inheritance; he was dying full of hope, or rather of confidence. We who

look back over the history of thousands of years see that even in the promised land there is no abiding, that from time to time a voice warns us, "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest!" that no nation, no system, can escape the mighty law of change which is the essence of all life. Yet spite of much change his work has lasted. All that is summed up by the long line of our great men, David no less than Joshua, Isaiah as well as Elijah, all that Israel has accomplished was rendered possible by him who, single-handed, trusting in the aid of God, freed his tribe and made of it a nation.

June 6, 1903.

XVIII

THE HOSPITAL NURSE

“But Deborah Rebecca’s nurse died, and she was buried beneath Beth-el under an oak : and the name of it was called Allon-Bachuth—that is, the oak of weeping.”—GENESIS xxxv. 8.

IN prefacing the appeal which it is my privilege to make to-day, with the passage from Genesis that I have quoted, I ask leave to explain that I do so not as a preacher expounding a text, but rather as an essayist placing a quotation at the head of his article.

I am in no sense whatever preaching a sermon. I lay no claim to the homiletic faculty, and I come here not as a preaching friar, but as a brother of the mendicant order.

It is an ancient, a respected, and a traditional brotherhood, and I belong by age and training and by all manner of links to a conservative, perhaps a reactionary, school of thought. I never can see the smallest reproach in the word reactionary. It all depends on the period to which your reaction carries you.

You here, I know, incline rather to that mental tendency which has a somewhat fainter regard for olden usage, and you, of course, are not one whit more ashamed of your views than my school and I object to the epithet reactionary, nor is there any reason why you should be.

Antiquity, after all, has not an equal fascination for everybody. The patin of age on olden bronzes, buried for ages in the ashes of Pompeii, has to some less charm than the modern reproduction resplendent with brightness and polish ; but to others antiquity has a spell which bewitches even through the dust and crust of ages, and beguiles hundreds daily from the luxurious modernity of Bond Street to the Hellenic collection in Savile Row.

The memories evoked by olden usage strike at any rate the historic sense, be these usages enshrined in the archaic ceremonies of a coronation, or in the still older forms of our ancient liturgies ; but whether we attach more or less importance to ancient customs, we are unanimous in the belief that the healing of the suffering, and the tending of the sick, are time-honoured virtues as to which all religious creeds are in accord.

This is a form of religious dogma in which

there are no Nonconformists, though, alas ! there are many who are negligent of the rites. The temples of this cult are the hospitals of the world, and the priests and preachers who minister therein are the surgeons, the physicians, and the nurses.

I will not here recapitulate the enormous diminution of human misery which has attended the efforts of this hierarchy, nor need I advert to the discovery of anæsthetics, or to the still greater discovery that many diseases are due to the growth of micro-organisms, and that, if their growth be prevented, these diseases can be avoided ; but I would point out how these discoveries bring relief to numberless cases which in times past no surgeon could have dreamed of touching. Indeed, the fear of a surgical operation, once undoubtedly well founded and general, is gradually being confined to a limited few, and many at least look forward with confidence to the time when this apprehension will be likened to the old superstitious fear of an eclipse, for though the disease may be dangerous or even fatal, the operation is ceasing to be either one or the other.

And then again, think of the science of prophylactic medicine—that science of prevention which has not only increased the duration of

human life, but has almost set back the clock of middle age. The duration of vigour and the duration of life increase, and the increase is largely due to the means by which disease can now be averted and avoided.

This is no rhetorical fancy of mine.

In 1851 the death-rate in London was 23.7 per 1000.

In 1901 it had declined to 17.6 per 1000, and the decrease was gradual, not spasmodic or sudden.

And the setting back of the clock of middle age is equally supported by statistics, and has been similarly gradual.

In 1851 there were 62,608 people in London aged between 65 and 75.

In 1901 there were 102,775.

In 1851 there were 19,845 people aged between 75 and 85.

In 1901 there were 46,846.

Of course, the increase in population has to be taken into account, and though I don't want to weary you with figures, accuracy is a virtue not inferior to charity.

The proportion per 10,000 of persons in London between 65 and 75 has risen from 265 in 1851 to 293 in 1901; and of persons over 75, from 84 to 103.

All of us note among our friends this increase in vigour and vitality of the middle-aged and elderly, and the figures I have given do but tabulate that which you all perceive.

All this progress is due to hospital work. If the benefit of hospitals is to be measured by a sordid standard, it may be termed an insurance that you pay, or at any rate that you owe, for the prolongation of life and for the health which makes life desirable, and I am here to-day to claim the insurance premium.

Day by day further progress is being made. May I remind you of what has been done recently, and is being done daily, in the investigation of the curative power of light?

Thousands of years ago, in the Babylonian story of the creation of the world, it is related that at the beginning of all things a dark chaotic primæval water existed in a state of tumult and agitation. This primæval ocean, personified in sculpture sometimes as a serpent, sometimes as a dragon, gave birth to terrible fiends and noxious demons, so that, according to the legend, the existence of mankind was impossible until Marduk, the god of light, encountered and demolished this venomous and formidable monster.

What the Babylonian poet dreamed, modern science has made a reality.

Light in varied forms is imprisoned and made our servant to encounter and demolish the poison of disease, and whereas it was thought that there was no force available for the destruction of noxious germs except the power of heat, science has now shown us that there is a second force—little less potent and a good deal more pleasant—the purifying power of light. Indeed, it is found that therapeutic power resides in a far greater degree in the light-giving than in the heat-giving ray.

We read of ultra-violet rays ; the expression has not been happily chosen, and has given rise to a popular misconception, viz. that the term ultra-violet is a definition of colour, whereas the colour of this ray is a point as yet wholly undetermined. The human eye cannot perceive the ray ; it is beyond the visible portion of the spectrum ; but we can detect the effect of it on various substances when it strikes upon them and fluoresces. It will fluoresce blue on glass made with lead ; it will fluoresce yellow on glass made with sodium, though it is impossible to detect by the eye any difference between lead-made and sodium-made glass.

This mysterious ray has been found to have

a curative effect upon many diseases hitherto incurable, and all these important discoveries took their rise in hospitals, and the benefits are confined to no section or class or religious denomination, but are shared by humanity as a whole.

Some of our brethren abroad, perhaps inevitably under the unhappy conditions of their life, have established Jewish hospitals. In England, the conditions being different, we are free of them. A mixture of theology and therapeutics is not a wise compound ; it is apt, if I may borrow an illustration from the laboratory, to generate too much explosive gas. I, at any rate, am appealing for London Hospitals, the boundaries of whose benefits have but one limit—the limit of the possibility of combat with disease.

But, indeed, the word boundary is a misnomer applied to London hospitals. The benefits which these institutions have showered on mankind are not confined even to the large number of in or out patients who come within their walls. The results are carried by doctors and nurses *urbi et orbi*; and if I venture to take the work of nurses as my chief theme to-day, and to quote the passage of tribute of respect to a nurse which I read to you a few minutes ago,

it is because I think that there can hardly be one family represented here which has not benefited by the skill of the hospital-trained nurse, and because perhaps it may interest you to learn how this training is carried on, how scientific and complete it is, and how it enables these ladies to carry the result of what they have been taught in hospitals into every quarter of the globe—in India and in Africa, behind the peaceful purdah of the zenana, and into the fierce strife of men and conflict of arms.

The system of training in the larger hospitals of London is pretty similar. Substantially this is what happens. Before being adopted as a probationer, the applicant, previous to entering into the wards, has to go through a course of a month or two's instruction in the preliminary nursing school. There she receives tuition, and passes a practical course of elementary anatomy, hygiene, dispensing, the making and antiseptic application of dressings and bandages, the moving a patient in bed, sick-room cookery, and, when necessary, housework.

At the end of this preliminary course, if the applicant be found fitting, she serves a further preliminary training of a couple of months in the wards, and thereafter, and *only* thereafter,

is she accepted for her full term of three years' instruction.

At the close of her three years, before receiving a certificate as nurse, she has to satisfy the examiners, who are pretty rigid, and in none of the best managed hospitals is a full certificate given to a probationer who has not served her full three years.

And now when a woman has obtained a full certificate and become a nurse, what are the hours of her duty?

A day nurse comes generally on duty at 8 A.M. and goes off duty at 9 P.M., but, of course, these hours are not continuous; there are intervals for meals, for rest and recreation, there are half holidays and whole holidays, so that the actual daily work is in these hospitals reduced on the average to something less than eight hours.

Alas! all hospitals cannot conform to this standard. An accusation was launched recently in one of the papers against hospitals for what was called sweating their nurses. The accusation was grossly exaggerated, though, I fear, in the case of some hospitals not absolutely groundless. But the indictment was brought against the wrong people. The hospital authorities are not the delinquents; the cul-

prits are those whose parsimony starves the hospitals, and I am sure you do not mean to enlist in that stingy regiment.

The alleviation of the lot of nurses is a question of cash. It is obvious that the sick must be watched and tended continuously, and if each nurse works fewer hours daily, more nurses are wanted. In a hospital with 600 beds, the adoption of the time-table I have just sketched necessitated an increase of 30 nurses, and as each nurse costs, including her board and uniform, about £55 a year, the extra expense entailed was £1650 a year.

Happily, all the London Hospitals are not understaffed. I am asking for that which is not only very needful, but which is reasonable and practical, namely, an increase of 500 nurses among the 150 hospitals aided by the Mansion House Fund, so that the daily work of a nurse shall be normally about eight hours, and this will entail an additional cost of £27,000 a year.

Of course, you alone cannot raise this sum, but this is pre-eminently, markedly, and manifestly a Jewish assembly, and one of the oldest Jewish Rabbis cautioned us against shirking duties because we may be unable to carry them to completion.

Some of us can remember the clumsy, clatter-

ing and chattering nurses of half a century ago. The nurse of to-day has to be tactful, gentle, and discreet, and is no more addicted to gossiping about the private affairs of her patients than are the doctors under whom she has studied.

Nurses were unfitting fifty years ago, but I hope you will not think me an overbigoted reactionary if I remind you that they were not always so, and that here in London, in the year 1390, there were female barber surgeons, regular members of the guild and legally admitted, who rivalled successfully their male brethren, and who like them, indeed, dressed hair as well as wounds. The over-specialisation which is complained of now evidently did not exist then.

But there are examples of skill and discretion of nurses a good deal further back.

When Odysseus came home to Ithaca and the nurse Eurycleia recognised him, he enjoined silence upon her. "Then the wise Eurycleia answered, saying, 'My child, what word has escaped the door of thy lips? Thou knowest how firm is my spirit, and that I keep me close as the adamant stone.'"

Eurycleia, whom Homer termed the wise, and who alone remembered the form and shape of Odysseus' wounds, is no bad model for the modern nurse. But such women do not spring

fully equipped like Athene from the head of Zeus. They must be trained and taught, and the hospitals for which I plead are now the training grounds.

You may ask, how can we help? There is but one way—personal service. The churches that collect £1500 or £2000 do not get this sum at church doors. It is collected, by church as by synagogue, through the personal effort of lay and cleric, and as you have no cleric, you must yourselves give the entire personal service. Visit yourselves some general hospital, and the evidence of what you will see there will stimulate you far beyond any words of mine. Give yourselves the necessary labour, and organise among your fellow-worshippers a house-to-house collection, and you will forcibly demonstrate the effect on your lives of your weekly attendance within these walls.

When you are ill, when you are suffering, these ladies alleviate your lot; when you are well, will you not lighten theirs? You profit by their gentleness, their patience, and their skill, and in your hands I leave their claim. It is a claim on your gratitude, gratitude for services rendered to you and to your kin. Some of these have gone to their last home, but their way thither has been soothed by the sympathy

and the patience of those for whom I plead, and I commend their cause as a debt due from the strong to the sick, from the hale to the stricken, a claim not merely on your generosity, but on your sense of rectitude, of equity, and of justice.

June 13, 1903.

XIX

THE CALL OF THE PROPHET

AMOS vii. 10-16

AT this time of little things—when compromise is a virtue, when vacillation replaces statesmanship, when culture breeds indecision, when enthusiasm is sneered at as vulgarity, when success is the great ideal of the multitude, when conventionality patronises religion as a convenient support for the existing order of things—it is with a profound sense of relief that we turn to the prophet of old. Here are the realities of life laid bare to our eyes, here is the elemental force of character and conviction, the burning enthusiasm for the good and the true, here runs the clear stream of spiritual life, reflecting in its depth the eternal light from above. No wonder that for all this no other explanation could be accepted as sufficient, but that it was implanted in the prophet by a special act of divine grace. Yet even if we should assume that this divine

spark was ever latent in Israel, bursting into flame out of the heart of the teacher and leader whenever the emergency arose, none the less great must be our reverence and gratitude to Him who lit that spark at the beginning of time, and invested it with such supreme potentialities.

The Book of Amos, in which you find the two readings of to-day, is but a short one, and if we exclude that portion at the end, the authenticity of which is not fully established, it is replete with gloom and with dark forebodings. No ray of sunshine relieves the depressing atmosphere of rebuke and denunciation out of which but rarely rises a cry of pity for the doomed nation.

"The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy," exclaims Amos; the task is hard, but He must be obeyed.

Let us now remember the surrounding circumstances which had been leading up to the appearance of Amos. The time is the eighth century. The two Jewish nations had just returned victoriously from wars with surrounding tribes, and had carried their frontiers back to the limits which had been set at the time of the greatest national prosperity under King Solomon. We find them in a stage of transition from purely agricultural into trading communities. For the first time we hear of

the great wealth, the luxury and display of one class and the poverty of another. The weak and the poor are oppressed, and their grievances can find no remedy, even the courts of justice being corrupted. On the religious side the sanctuaries at Beth-el and Gilgal had become the centres of a worship differing very little from that of the neighbouring nations. The people were still convinced of the efficacy of their sacrifices, and believed that the smell of their burnt-offerings was "pleasant in the nostrils of God." They were forgetting the symbolical meaning of the ritual, which, instead of being the means of establishing an approachment of the people to their God, had become an end in itself. No doubt this perversion was not so deeply rooted in the thinly populated districts, such as where Amos had lived, but it seems to have infested more the ruling and wealthier classes, against which the prophet's denunciations are particularly directed.

Tekoah, the place whence Amos came, was a district well adapted to give birth to a prophet ; a mountainous region covered after the spring rains with sudden verdure, which was soon burnt up by the summer heat, leaving just enough sustenance for the flocks of mountain sheep such as we are told Amos used to tend

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before the call of the Lord took him away. We can imagine him sitting there in the lonely wilderness brooding and thinking, gazing at the white towers of Jerusalem, hardly discernible on the horizon like the symbol of a distant hope, watching the million-starred expanse of heaven at night, thinking of the great deeds which the God of Israel had done for His people and the covenant He had made with them. And then would come the remembrance of the state of Israel, the false worship at the sanctuaries, the outrages of the rich, and the corruption of the mighty. Who was to call Israel back from the path of evil? Then it was that he felt the voice of the Lord urging him on; he, Amos, was to bring the words of their God to the erring nation. Nor was there any time to be lost. The day of doom was drawing near. Assyria was sending a conquering army southwards, enslaving nation after nation; how could Israel withstand these myriads of warriors? Only the Lord could avert the disaster. But here comes the problem which confronted him. He knew that the downfall of the nation was certain. The covenant between God and His people was that he would protect them as long as they worshipped Him. Yet how could *He* break His promise? So it must be Israel which has broken the covenant.

The worship at Beth-el was a sham worship, because it left the character of the people unaffected. It is the exposure of the hollowness of this worship which is the burden of his prophecy. Listen to the sarcasm: "At Gilgal multiply transgressions, and bring your sacrifices every morning and your tithes after three years, and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the free offerings." And again: "Have you offered unto Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? Take you away from Me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgement run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." How could they believe that the offering of gifts in the form of sacrifices was true worship? Had the Lord to be bribed into that greatest act of mercy towards Israel, the making of them into a nation by bringing them away from Egypt? No, the true worship is purity of life in the individual and righteousness in the nation. And so, while on the one hand he denounces the existing state, he clearly shows the way to the true religion by going back to its very fountain-head. The voice in your heart that bids you "hate the evil and love the good" is the echo of God's supreme righteousness.

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Here is the eternal bond which unites you with your fellow-men and the God above. As it is said: "But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

The recognition of this great fact, viz. the supremacy of the moral ideal as the very essence of God, is the finest jewel in the crown of Israel. This is the great gift which Israel offered to humanity, and without which moral progress would have been indefinitely delayed. Such being the message of Amos, denouncing both the political and the religious system of the day, we cannot be surprised to find the authorities taking steps to suppress him. Nothing could be more dramatic, truer to life than this plain, bold relation of the incident which you have heard read out to-day. There are the priest and courtier bringing the facts of the case before the king, insinuating such motives to Amos as he knows will damage him in the eyes of the king. Evidently to represent the prophet merely as a moral reformer might fail to influence the king in the desired direction, and therefore Amos is represented as a political conspirator and a demagogue: "The land is not able to bear all his words," says the priest. Amaziah gets a free hand from the king, and proceeds immediately to deal with Amos.

"Go and flee thee away into the land of Judah," he tells Amos. "What is the good of these new notions," he says, "our religion is good enough for us. Let those disturbers of the peace go elsewhere." Poor Amaziah! the great Assyrian thundercloud was not visible on *his* narrow horizon. Then comes Amos' reply: "I am no prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was an herdsman." To understand him correctly we must remember that hitherto the prophet in Israel had held a kind of official position as adviser of the king in cases of national emergency. The so-called sons of prophets were also loosely attached to the court and the national sanctuaries, and seem to have made a profession out of prophecy, by which they earned their living. Amos protests against being taken for one of them. He is only a shepherd, who in obedience to the divine call has come to prophesy to Israel. The centres of religious worship having become corrupted, it was out of the wilderness that the new prophet had to come.

But this meeting of priest and prophet has a special significance for us as being typical of and exposing two fundamentally different types, the conflict of which fills the pages of the history of the progress of the world. On the one side the

upholder of the existing order of things, on the other side the reformer. Call them materialist and idealist, Conservative and Liberal, optimist and pessimist, they will never agree, will never be reconciled. The dreamers and idealists gave us our religion; the utilitarians and materialists preserved our ritual, and are defending it to this day. The analogy between the present and the times of Amos must be obvious to all of you. The old evils can be cured by the old remedies. Back to the fundamental principles of Judaism we have to go, as Amos did. If we are confronted by the reproach, this is not Judaism, we need not mind it; the priest Amaziah no doubt disputed too the Judaism of Amos. Indeed, *they* are belittling our religion who doubt that, even when stripped of all the forms and ordinances which have grown over and almost suffocated it, there is still left its eternal essence in the assertion of the unity of God and His righteousness. As we have heard Amos preach a new and wider conception of Judaism according to the needs of his time, so to-day the expression of our religious needs must find new and more suitable forms which will help us and inspire us to right doing and right living. This is not a breaking-up of the continuity of our religion, it is only the reasser-

tion of a principle established and apparent in the history of ancient Israel.

We too are grateful and proud of our past ; but if our forbears brought their finest feeling and understanding to the formation of *their* religious ideals, we claim the same right for ourselves. As humanity rises on the stepping-stones of its dead self to higher ideals and aspirations, it has to drop the outward symbols of ideals which animated former generations. To the treasures of inner experiences of our fathers we add our own, and, standing on their shoulders, gain a wider outlook. True, this wider outlook cannot but emphasise still more our own insignificance, and increase our awe and reverence for the infinite God, by making us perceive the impenetrable vastness beyond. And yet even so we may apprehend a slight breaking of the dawn, where, from a lower level, there seemed only gloom and darkness. It may be our fate, too, to be hated as "those who rebuke in the gate." We know that, were it not, as the prophet has it, that "the prudent keep silence," liberal Judaism would make greater progress, yet we, too, when the best within us tells us that the Lord has spoken, must prophesy in our way. But let me hasten to add, if we claim this privilege, we must also

be conscious of the corresponding duties it involves. Let us not forget that we must make sure that the voice which urges us on comes out of a pure heart, that it is not stained by worldly motives. If we wish to testify to our new ideal with our mouth, let us first testify to it in our lives. "Seek good and not evil, that ye may live," must be written in our hearts in letters of gold. Not to seek good is not to live, it is only to exist. Life must be a continuous striving after the good, a sustained effort to come nearer and nearer to our God, who is the source and perfection of goodness. It is easy to rise to the call of duty in the case of a great emergency, but it is exceedingly difficult in the routine of the daily life to be ever observant of those many little duties, which in their totality make its greatest part. How do our acts in our business, in our home, appear when measured by the standard of our professed ideals. If we are critical and sensitive in matters of religion, let us apply the same standard to the demands of conventionality ; dissimulation and untruthfulness are not the smaller evils because they are exacted in the sacred name of polite manners. What our modern life suffers from most particularly is the lack of the sense of proportion as to how we should

employ it. If we complain that in religious worship the means have usurped the place of the end, we must honestly ask ourselves if in the pursuit of our business the same evil is not apparent. If we throw off the old forms and ordinances because they have ceased to have the meaning for us which they had at other times and under different conditions, we cannot therefore dispense with discipline itself.

Israel and Judaism have always been the most observed among the nations, the critical eye of non-Jews is ever watching. *We* are the observed of the observed, and this ought to be a special incentive to us not to fall short in doing our very best. In the first place, we must preserve and strengthen those virtues which have always been associated with Judaism, and which to us are a cause of justified pride. Indeed, if the more liberal interpretation of Judaism would mean a weakening in the sanctity of family life, in the purity of the relations between man and woman, in our temperate habits, we should have to consider if it was not too high a price to pay for reform. There is also our solidarity, of which a great deal has been made by our enemies. The time has not yet come that, without injustice, we can dispense with it. Indeed, it would be cowardly to renounce this

solidarity at a time when religious persecutions are again rife. Must we not ask ourselves seriously, if in the face of the horrible Kishineff massacres, and the fiendish devices of oppression practised systematically by perfidious Roumania, combined action should not be taken? If the great powers will not move when their treaties are ignored and even counteracted, if those in whose hands is the power to see justice done close their eyes to the relentless attempt to make life impossible to the Jews, whose rights they have guaranteed, then indeed let us use whatever strength we have to stop the iniquity.

Greater even than the unmentionable horrors of Kishineff is that system of forcing men into such social and economic conditions where they must inevitably forfeit the respect and the affection of the people among whom they have to live, and which must rob them of all the finer feelings and instincts of humanity. And then finally to persecute them for being what the persecutor himself has made of them, is a crime unsurpassed by the Inquisition. But when we have done all we could, let us hark back to the prophet to strengthen our faith in divine justice and righteousness. Let us not complain, "The Lord has forsaken us." To Him, as the Psalmist says, a thousand years are

like a day ; and although in our shortness of vision we cannot fully grasp the workings of the divine Providence, we still believe that right and justice will prevail in the end.

What we claim is not only that the new interpretation of Judaism will not weaken those inherited virtues, that the sanctity of family life, the purity in the relations between men and women, our temperate habits, our solidarity will not suffer by it—no, on the contrary it will give them new life. *We* can understand the reasons why the anglicised younger Jewish generation in the East End is falling away from traditional Judaism. The influence of the environment naturally manifests itself by imposing on the Jewish minority the habits, and first of all the less desirable habits, of the Christian majority. If orthodoxy stands perplexed and paralysed, is it not our duty to stretch out our helping hand? Let us tell these Jews that Judaism has been misrepresented to them, that its essence is not the rota of petty forms and observances which they have been taught, but a religion founded deeply in the human heart ; that the true observance consists in the good life—righteousness. They must be made to see the difference between those ordinances, which are only given as a discipline, and the commandments referring to conduct. If the

eating of Tripha is made an offence as reprehensible as dishonesty, we cannot wonder that, by mere logic, the breach of the dietary laws will make the breach of the moral laws so much easier.

This problem is of such wide ramification that I can only touch on it. It includes also the question of religious instruction. What goes under that name, and is at present obtainable, is with few exceptions inefficient, unattractive and amateurish. Knowing that we cannot hope to influence to any considerable extent men and women whose views are set, if this movement is to take firm root, we must try and get hold of the children. There must be a great deal of latent energy among the young girls in our well-to-do Jewish households running to waste amongst the insipid routine of petty social duties. Could not they, under the auspices of this Union, get the training to fit them to become teachers of religion to our children? To hold a religious service once a week is not enough ; a beginning should be made with the training of teachers, and then centres should be started all over London where classes could be held. Then we can hope that this small beginning will grow and spread further and further. Who knows if the very child is not already

born, in whose heart lies dormant the divine fire, waiting for the sympathetic hand of the religious teacher to awaken and nourish it. How sorely do we need a leader to the spiritual Zion, the leader who will bring light where there is now darkness, and peace where there is now strife. Shall the tender plant die for lack of congenial soil, for want of the gardener's fostering care?

If it has been deemed expedient in the past to emphasise those aspects of Judaism wherein it differs from other religions, perhaps the time has come now to note wherein we agree. As we are participating in the national and intellectual life around us, we observe the same tendencies in the development of our religious views as are apparent amongst non-Jews. Dogmas and forms are receding into the background, exposing the fundamental moral law common to us all. "Hate the evil and love the good, that you may live," is repeated in cathedral and chapel. God's righteousness is the ideal which lights the path of all good men and women. Many are struggling upwards towards that great light of the universe; of paths there are many, but the goal is the same. Let us trust that on the path we have chosen we shall climb higher and higher, until in the far-distant future the

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children of all mankind shall meet on the summit. Then righteousness will reign supreme, and the great promise will be fulfilled :—

בְּיוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה יְיָ אֶחָד
וְשֵׁמוֹ אֶחָד

*On that day the Lord will be acknowledged one,
and His name one.*

June 20, 1903.

XX

THE WORK OF THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS UNION

Be strong, O Zerubbabel . . . be strong, all ye people of the land, and work, for I am with you : . . . and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.—HAGGAI, chap. ii., portions of verses 4-9.

WE have just read the whole passage, a few phrases of which form our text. The prophet Haggai has been often criticised for his lack of style ; he is indeed the least eloquent of the prophets. Yet his simple, healthy manliness is more moving than rhetoric. Hence, whenever men are engaged in a difficult, doubtful effort at religious revival, they turn to Haggai automatically for encouragement. His message has a strange power to mitigate difficulty, to conquer doubt. To us to-day his words may, at one and the same time, come to stimulate our energy and soften our mood. Strength, work, peace—this is Haggai's trilogy ; let us make it ours. It is a threefold cord which shall not easily be broken.

The conditions under which Haggai spoke were not entirely unlike ours. When he called for strength, work, peace, the second Temple was in slow and painful process of erection on the site of the first. The returned exiles were unmanned by hostility without and despondency within. They could not yet see the new Temple, it was still incomplete. But its ground-plan and its dimensions were already visible. Disappointment ensued, for imagination had conceived something much more imposing than the eye beheld. Experience fell below hope. Then it was that Haggai delivered his message. He bade his brethren dry their eyes and use their hands. A Temple is not re-built in a day. Let them go forward. If they would be strong and work, leaders and people together, then would the latter glory of the House be greater than the former, and the peace of God would find its way into the place then disturbed by dissension and misunderstanding.

To take the last point first, it is, my friends, a source of joy to us to feel that our first year closes in peace, though it opened in war. We gratefully welcome the change that has undoubtedly occurred. The first bitterness has passed. We knew, of course, that as we stood for an unofficial Judaism, we could not expect

official blessings. But we still hope that the official representatives of our community, men whom we venerate, from whom it is a pain to differ, will in course of time perceive that ours is an absolutely indispensable movement, that it is destined to strengthen Judaism, and that our association with public places of worship would be a boon to those places as well as to us. We still hope that it will be recognised as a generous and wise policy to lend the synagogue buildings for a movement such as ours, without any conditions, except such as are already satisfied by the character of the men and women who are responsible for the movement. Our Union stands in no hostility to the current Judaism. It seeks not to oppose or even to change it, but to supplement it. At first we gave no *intentional* offence; at last it is seen that we have given no offence at all. To ourselves our services have done good, to none have they done harm.

In laying stress on peace, thus taking the third part of Haggai's trilogy first, my intention is to emphasise that we are animated by no arrogant, unconciliatory spirit. On certain points, naturally, we are unbending. Haggai bids us be strong if we would win real peace; peace is never stable when it is won by weak-

ness. But we are willing to accept profitable advice, anxious to yield to useful criticism. As to our form of service, we are ready to change it now, and shall always be ready to change it for the better. We have recently heard proclaimed a doctrine which practically implies the verbal inspiration of the orthodox Prayer Book. Well, as we dispute this claim for the old liturgy, we are not likely to make any such preposterous claim for our own liturgy. Our little service book was never meant to be final, though, hastily compiled as it was, it nevertheless possesses many conspicuous merits. But, as you are aware, a revised service book is now nearly ready. This second edition will contain considerable changes, but it will be no more final than the first. It will still be what our service has been from the first, an "occasional" service, which should not be judged as though it were meant to constitute or replace any of the ordinary services of the synagogue.

Except in one instance, these changes will, however, represent no departure whatever from the principles which animated the compilers of the first edition. The volume will be much larger in size than our present booklet, it will contain more than it was possible to include before, and it will give room for fuller emphasis

of some points of great importance. More of the traditional prayers will be introduced, there will be far more Psalms, there will be a good deal more Hebrew, there will be fuller references to the Sabbath, there will be an emphasised allusion to immortality and to the hopes which many of you entertain as to the ingathering of Israel. In one instance we are acquiescing in a principle which has been urged upon us, with more vigour than suavity, both from within and without our Union. I allude to the decision to remove the one hymn which needed editing to suit it for Jewish worship—hymn No. 7 of our present collection. To compensate for the omission, a new hymn has been written by a member of the Union, which is, alas ! far inferior to Rinckhart's, which it will replace, but which is based on the same passage from the Jewish Ben Sira which Rinckhart adapted. In general it may be said that we will not in future admit any hymn which needs editing or expurgating or modifying to fit it for Jewish use.

But this is a different thing from what some of our critics have demanded. We do not propose to eliminate hymns which are simply paraphrases of Hebrew Psalms, because these paraphrases happen to have been made by non-

Jews. Why should we be denied the pleasure and advantage of singing, as we have earnestly sung to-day, the stirring adaptation of the opening verses of Psalm xc., "O God, our help in ages past"? It is hard to see why it is lawful for orthodox ministers to use, in synagogue, the Anglican prose version of the Bible, but unlawful for us to use metrical versions by hands not more Christian than King James's translators or Queen Victoria's revisers. Nevertheless, we are happy to be able to include several new metrical paraphrases of Psalms, which have been prepared for our second edition by a Jewess who is gifted with a remarkable talent for rendering into beautiful English the compositions of poets who wrote in Hebrew.

If these changes tend to bring our service into closer harmony with Jewish tradition, we shall have another and a very attractive reason for loving our service. But tradition, as we understand it, must be made as well as used. We make tradition by bringing our worship into vital accord with our modern feelings, because we thus hand on something living to our successors. We gladly retain the old traditional prayers unchanged whenever we can; we are not only glad, we are grateful and proud to do so; proud and grateful that the old prayers

are mostly so beautiful, so written not for a day but for all time, that change is rarely necessary to suit them to the most fastidious modern taste. But although rarely, yet sometimes change is necessary. If by a turn of a phrase we can eliminate an incongruity, or by compression remove tautology from an otherwise noble passage, why should we not turn the phrase or make the compression? Our traditional prayers, as we now have them, are the result of centuries of precisely this process of change and re-casting. Again, if we miss in our old Prayer Book forms of prayer which our soul cries aloud for, we must supply the omission rather than starve our souls. In this, too, we are doing what our fathers always did. We will sing old songs, but also new songs to the Lord, for we at least do not forget that even the Psalms once were new. We refuse to believe that the Jewish genius for prayer-writing suddenly left our people in the sixteenth century, when the hymn *Lecha Dodi* was admitted as the last permanent addition to the orthodox Prayer Book.

Again, Hebrew is a necessary adjunct to Jewish worship. God grant that a time may come when our people shall be able to pray in Hebrew, with intelligence, with emotion, with spontaneity! But that time is not yet,

and we must face present facts. Prayer in Hebrew is an excellent thing, but prayer is the essential thing ; and we must have prayer in English rather than no prayer at all. In arguing thus we are following tradition, but it is an older tradition than prevails at the moment in the orthodox view. The same is the case with our use of instrumental music on the Sabbath—a matter in which we have always been ready to yield, though the practice has the support of ancient Psalmic tradition. But in some matters, and especially in our firm, and, I trust, final resolve to countenance no separation of the sexes in worship, we have the right and the duty to mould Jewish customs to our present ideas, and thus bring our religious forms into accord with our religious convictions.

Strength, Work, Peace ! Who could so well enforce this as the one who has shown most strength, has done most work, has most used his influence for peace ? We are all distressed at the absence of Mr. Montefiore to-day. We would have liked to hear him sum up the results of the movement which he has led ; to hear him answer the question : Has our Union succeeded ? Not that any individual can speak for the Union ; certainly the present speaker makes no such claim for anything he is saying

to-day. But can there be any doubt that the question must be answered in the affirmative? That the Union has drawn some nearer to Judaism, that it has given them a service which they attend with spiritual satisfaction, is undeniable. To some others, already firm in faith, the Union has supplied an additional impulse to loyalty. In some it has planted new hopes, in others it has strengthened old hopes. The Union has shown how compatible Judaism is with modern life ; it has shown that, by enlarging its tent, our religion can still accommodate new-century as well as old-century Jews. This Union, my friends, must live. It has already given an impetus to religious revival in the general Jewish community, but if the Union has been needed this year, it will be more needed next year. As the years go on, so the whole training and education of our boys and girls tend more and more to leave the old Jewish groove, to run into quite other grooves. The complexion of Jewish life is changing in many Jewish circles. If Judaism is to remain a living religion to those who move and have their being in these altered conditions, then our Union has an imperative mission, the burden of which we must resolutely continue to bear. We must be strong, we must work, we must

bring to our brothers and sisters the peace which Judaism alone can bring them.

And leaving this general consideration, there is one special matter in which our Union has succeeded to a quite remarkable degree. We have proved, by the practical logic of facts, that it is possible to restore a free pulpit, and, what is far more important, a free reading-desk. We Jews speak with two voices. In theory, we assert that Judaism has no dogmatic tests ; but, in practice, dogmatic tests are all too much in evidence. Worse than this, there is growing up a dangerous, un-Jewish distinction between clergy and laity. No one denies that in our modern life we must have an official clergy—specialists in theology and in philanthropy. But this is very different from creating a clerical caste. Our Union services, in this important matter, are the most Jewish in the Metropolis. Here the reader is, as of old, a genuine שליח צבור—a delegate of the congregation, of which he himself is an ordinary member. Now this reversion to old custom, this freeing of the pulpit and Almehmar to all members of the congregation is a great stride towards a genuine religious revival.

It is not a question of Orthodoxy or Reform. In Cambridge, where the service is completely

“Orthodox,” and is exclusively in Hebrew, the same principle prevails. It is not a question of Party, it is a question of Judaism. “Be strong and work, all ye people,” so spoke Haggai. You will the more love Judaism, the more you work for it; just as you will be better affected to public worship when you yourselves lead it. We are all priests, we recognise no ministerial caste. This is decisive in answer to the question: Has the Union succeeded? Not only have we a fine voluntary choir, which has performed its duties with a skill and devotion beyond praise; a choir, moreover, composed almost entirely of our own members. But, since last autumn, no less than eighteen of our members have read and preached here. Of these all but three were non-professionals. And how have these amateurs acquitted themselves? Has their preaching lacked freshness or eloquence? Has their reading lacked fervour or devotion? A Judaism, honest, vital, has been here preached; here has been heard the voice of those who lead in prayer, because they feel the prayerful impulse. This is the true Jewish conception of a congregation, self-governing, self-officered, self-sustained, self-conscienced.

The Union is thus on its way to fulfilling one of its main objects—to re-attach the community

to its public worship. We have begun well by bringing home to the community the rights of each individual Jew, and the obligations of each individual Jew. For it is not one or the other that can rebuild the walls, and raise a Temple worthy, capable of holding the whole House of Israel. As in Nehemiah's days, so in ours, it must be said: "And we returned all of us to the walls." All of us, not an individual here and there: to the walls, to construct not to destroy. We may claim that we have done something in a year; but we have left more undone. We, like Haggai's contemporaries, find performance less than promise. Then listen to Haggai's plea. Be bold, be true. Let these assemblages strengthen your moral fibre, redouble your loyalty to Judaism, kindle a new confidence in its power to save you, in your power to save it.

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